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TRACTS

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No. 142.

THE

DEATH-BED OF A FREETHINKER;

EXEMPLIFIED IN THE LAST HOURS

OF THE

HON. FRANCIS NEWPORT,

WHO DIED AT WESTMINSTER, DEC. 8, 1692.

ABRIDGED FROM THE NARRATIVE PUBLISHED BY A PERSONAL WITNESS OF THE FACTS.

At sixteen, the honorable Francis Newport was sent to the University, perfectly acquainted with the Latin and Greek languages, where he continued five years, and behaved so agreeably to his religious education, that he was looked upon as a blessing and ornament to his family.

At twenty-one, he came to London, and entered himself at ——, to study the law. His new acquaintance began to rally him for his religion: to whom he would say, "Gentlemen, you, who pretend to reason, cannot count laughter a conclusive argument; if religion be so absurd as you would have me believe, why do you not give some fair reasons against it?" This, some of them would attempt; and though their arguments at first were as unsuccessful as their raillery, yet the poison sunk by degrees, and at last tainted him as deeply as themselves. He was adopted into their society, which met to lay down rules for being so

critically wicked, that the law should not be able to take hold of them. He had too much prudence to lay himself open: he still kept a fair correspondence with his friends, and in strange places was sober and reserved; but in secret, and among his acquaintance, he was as wicked as good parts, abundance of temptations, and a fair estate, enabled him to be.

On November 30, 1692, he was ill; and found, notwithstanding all his precautions, that he had not shaken off the expectations of another life.

This made him throw himself upon a bed, and break out into these expressions: "Whence this war in my breast? What argument is there now to assist me against matter of fact? Do I assert that there is no hell, while I feel one in my own bosom? Am I certain there is no after retribution, when I feel a present judgment? Do I affirm my soul to be as mortal as my body, when this languishes, and that is vigorous as ever? O, that any one could restore me to my ancient guard of piety and innocence! Wretch that I am! whither shall I fly from this breast? What will become of me?"

One of his old companions coming in, said, "How now, brother! Why this? Why this melancholy posture? What is the matter?" He replied, "It is you and your companions, who have instilled your principles into me, which now, when I have most need of them, leave me in confusion and despair. What advice or comfort have you now to fortify me with, against the fearful expectations of another life? Are you sure that the soul is material and mortal, and that it will dissolve with the body?" "So certain," replied the other, "that I venture my whole upon it."

Here I interrupted them by coming into the room; and

applying myself to the sick person, told him I was a stranger to him, but hearing he was ill, I thought it my duty to offer him what service I was capable of. "I thank you," said he, "I desire you to engage that gentleman, that sits there, and prove to him that the soul is not matter, nor mortal." This I endeavored to do by several arguments; to which the sick gentleman answered only with a sigh, while his friend made haste out of the room. I was surprised at such an effect, and desired to know the reason. "Alas, sir," said he, "you have undeceived me too late; I was afraid of nothing so much as the immortality of the soul: now you have assured me of that, you have ascertained me of a hell, and a portion among those who have apostatized from their religion. You have now sealed my damnation, by giving me an earnest of it: I mean an awakened conscience, that brings my sins into remembrance, by reckoning up the numerous catalogue for which I must go and give an account. O, apostate wretch, from what hopes art thou fallen! O that I had never known what religion was; then I had never denied my Saviour, nor been so black an heir of perdition!"

I stood speechless some time at the strange expressions; but, as soon as I could recollect myself, said, "Sir, I would have you take care how you violate the mercy of God, and think so lightly of the sufferings of Christ, as if they were not sufficient for the redemption of the greatest sinner. This may be a delusion of the devil. If you are convinced the soul is immortal, I hope it is to a good end; if you had died ignorant of it, you had been miserably undeceived in another world; now you have some time to prepare for your welfare."

To which he replied, "As to the mercies of God in

Christ, I once knew and tasted what they were; which is now part of my curse, in that I am now sensible of my loss: they are, I grant you, sufficient for those that have any share in them; but what is that to me, who have denied Christ? I have daily crucified him afresh, and put him to an open shame. The devil has nothing to do with the torture I undergo; it is no delusion of his, but the just judgment of God; and it is also a part of my heavy judgment, that you have given me a sensible horror of my sin, by proving my soul is immortal. Had I gone straight to hell in my old opinion, I had endured but one hell, whereas I now feel two; I mean not only an inexpressible torture which I carry in my own breast, but an expectation of I know not what change. O that I were in hell, that I might feel the worst! and yet I fear to die, because the worst will never have an end." All this he spoke with an air of eagerness, and such horror as is scarcely to be imagined.

He was got to bed, refusing all sustenance, and had an exceeding sweating, through the extremity of his torments.

Before I took my leave of him, I desired to pray by him; which, with much reluctance, he consented to. In the midst of prayer, he groaned extremely, tossing himself as if he were in the agonies of death. When prayer was over, I asked him the reason of it. He answered, "As the damned in hell, who lift up their eyes in torments, and behold afar off the saints in Abraham's bosom, have thereby their torments doubled, first, by reflecting on the misery they are in, and, secondly, by observing the happiness they have lost; so I, knowing myself to be hardened, and sealed to damnation, hearing the prayers of the righteous, to which God's ears are ever open, have my torment increased by thinking how I am excluded from such a privilege, and

have no other portion left me, than blaspheming, weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth for ever."

"Pray, sir," said I, "consider there is a vast difference between you and them in hell: they are lost irrecoverably for evermore, without any opportunity of a reprieve, or hope of pardon; you are yet alive, and have the promises, in common with other sinners; Christ died for sinners; and God hath sworn by himself, "*As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.*"

He replied, with his usual earnestness, "I will grant as much difference between me and those in hell, as between a common devil and a devil incarnate: if these are irrecoverably lost, without opportunity of reprieve, or hopes of pardon, and I am yet alive, what then? what is the consequence? Not that the promises belong in common to me with other sinners, nor to any sinners but such as believe and repent. If Christ died for sinners, it was such as repent and believe; but though I would, I can do neither: I have outstood my day of grace, am hardened and reprobate. If God delight not in the death of sinners, it is of such sinners as repent and turn to him; but his justice will vindicate itself on such obstinate sinners as I, who have denied his power and providence, both in my words and actions. Now he has met with me for it: and O! it is *a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* If God was not against me, I should not care, though all the power and malice of men were joined against me; though all the legions of hell continued to torture me with the most consuming pains; but when an irreconcilable God looks down upon his creature in wrath, and consigns him over to eternal vengeance, this is intolerable, inexpressible! Ah, who can dwell with

eternal burnings? O ye, that have any hope, that have not passed the day of grace, cry mightily to God day and night; think no labor too much to secure you from the wrath of God. *O! who can stand before him, when he is angry?* What stubble can resist that consuming fire?"

This, and more to the same purpose, he spoke with so deep a concern, the tears all the while trickling down his face, that no one in the room could forbear weeping. Perceiving this, he said, "If ye weep at the image and bare relation of the effects of God's wrath, what, then, do I suffer, who actually lie under the very weight of his fury? Refrain your tears, for it is in vain: pity is no debt to me: nothing is so proper for me, as some curse to complete my misery, and free me from the torment of expectation." Here he paused a while; then looking towards the fire, he said, "Oh that I was to lie and broil upon that fire a thousand years, to purchase the favor of God, and be reconciled to him again! But it is a fruitless wish; millions of millions of years will bring me no nearer the end of my torments, than one poor hour. Oh, eternity, eternity; who can discover the abyss of eternity? Who can paraphrase upon these words *for ever and ever?*

It began to grow late; so I took my leave of him for that night, promising to come again the next day, when I found his mind in the same condition still, but his body much weakened: there were with him three or four divines, who had been at prayer; which, they told me, had produced the same uneasiness in him as before.

One of them reminded him that Peter denied his Master with oaths and curses, and was received again into his favor. He replied, "It is true, Peter did deny his Master, as I have done; but what then? His Master prayed for him,

that his faith should not fail: accordingly, he looked him into repentance, and assisted him by his Spirit to perfect it. Now, if he would assist me to repent, I should do so too; but he has justly withdrawn his intercession from me: I have grieved his Holy Spirit so often, that he has justly withdrawn his influences from me, and in the room thereof has left me the spirit of impenitence and reprobation; and given me a certain earnest of a fearful inheritance in another life." He spoke little more that day; much company pressing towards night, orders were given to prevent it: at six o'clock, we all looked upon one another to know what course to take; no texts being offered in his favor, but which he turned another way.

While we were thus musing, he cried out with the utmost vehemence, "How long, O Lord! shall thy wrath burn for ever against me? Shall thy eternal justice exact upon a poor despicable worm? What is my value or worth, that thou shouldest pour out full vials of wrath upon me? Oh, that thou wouldst let go thy hand for ever, forget, and let me fall into my first nothing! As my righteousness could have profited thee nothing, so my impieties can have done thee no hurt; therefore annihilate me, and let me perish. Be not angry that I thus expostulate with thee; it will be but a little while before thy wrath shall force the most dreadful blasphemies from me. Oh, that thou wouldst take away my being, or misery; neither can increase or diminish thy happiness; and therefore let them both cease, and let my name be known no more. But if I must be, and be immortal, and thou wilt punish me because I have despised thee, let a privation of thought suffice, and let me pass my eternity in a dream, without ever being awakened by the pangs of torment, or by the gnawing of the worm

that never dies. But oh, fruitless desires! I am expostulating with a God that for ever hath shut out my prayers; and only protracts my breath a little longer, to make me an example to others. O! ye rocks and mountains, that ye would cover and hide me from the wrath of an incensed God: but I cannot flee from his presence; what he hath begun he will finish. He will extend his wrath against me for ever and ever."

Here some one knocked at the door, and it proved to be the postman, with a letter for him; which being told him, "How," said he, "a letter for me! A little longer, and I expect another sort of message; I am very shortly to give an account of every secret action I have done; and I have a mind to make an experiment to see how I can bear it. Pray, sir," added he to me, "do me the favor to read me this letter. The contents I know not, but I suspect it comes from some of my old acquaintance." I desired to be excused, alleging there might be something in it improper to be divulged. "Nothing," replied he, "can affect me now; I have no honor, no reputation, and, what is yet worse, no heaven to lose, by this or any other act." Upon this, I broke it open. The letter received was as follows:

"Dearest Sir—Understanding you are dangerously ill, and that it has had a melancholy effect upon you, I could not, considering our strict friendship, but endeavor to remove those evils your mind may be under; which, perhaps, is an office no less grateful than making the body sound. Sickness and death are the common lot of mankind; and to repine and grieve at this lot, is to combat the laws of nature, and fight against impossibilities. What wise man repines at the heat in summer, or the cold in winter? A common evil

ceases to be an evil. But perhaps your melancholy suggests to you, that it is a dismal thing to launch into an unknown abyss. I answer, Sometimes I dream of dreadful things, but when I awake, all vanishes. Thus, if we examine death and its consequences by our reason, those formidable monsters grow tame and familiar to us. I would demand of him who asks me what estate I shall be in after death, what estate he was in before life. Pain and pleasure will leave their impressions upon a human spirit. If I was either happy or miserable before I was born, I must still retain the impression; but I do not now, therefore I shall not hereafter; I came out of nothing, and shall return into it. As the flame of an extinguished candle dissolves and loses itself in the circumambient air, even so the taper of life vanishes into ether, and is no more, when once the laws of the vital union are broken. Death itself is nothing, and after death is nothing. Take courage, man: either die like yourself, master of your own fate and happiness, so long as it is to be kept; or else recover, and live worthy of the character of a person who knows how either to live or die. So wishes, etc."

This letter was but fuel to the tormenting flame before in the breast of the sick gentleman, who immediately dictated the following answer:

"Sir—Being not able to use my own, I have borrowed another hand to answer yours. You say well, it is a more grateful office to endeavor to remove the disorders of the mind than of the body. What you urge of the common lot of mankind, as death and sickness, I could wish were my case; but my affliction is, that despair and hell are the

common lot of atheists. Now your argument cannot reach my case, unless you first prove that atheism is as inevitable as death and sickness, and that therefore the effects of it are to be borne patiently, unless a man will combat necessity and fight against the laws of fate. I have formerly used this way of arguing myself, but wonder now how I could ever think it conclusive.

"You say, that if we examine death and its supposed consequences by our reason, those formidable monsters grow tame and familiar: if, by our reason, you mean either that peculiar to atheists, or the common reason of human nature, I am sure these monsters will grow less tame and familiar, the more we think of them. Since no reason shows what an unexperienced death is, or what the change consequent upon it, how can we judge of things we do not know? Reason on such things as long as you please, and you will be at last as far from the truth as when you began.

"Your argument is extremely weak about a preëxistent and a future state: I retain no impression of past happiness or misery, therefore there is none to come; how that is a consequence, I do not see. Next you would have me believe, upon your bare word, that death is nothing, and after death is nothing: pray, how do you know, having not yet tried? There are a great many that say the contrary.

"I have only concerned myself with the rationality of your letter, that you may believe I am not distracted; which I would desire you to believe, that what I am going to say may not have less weight with you. It is true, and whether you believe it or not, you will find it so at last; if I could force you to believe it, I would. All I can do is, to deal with you as a reasonable creature, by opening my breast to you, and then leaving you at your liberty to act

as you please. While we are in health and business, we may act contrary to our intentions, and plead for the thing we believe not; but when we come to die, the vizard is taken off, and the man appears as he is. This is my condition, and therefore I can have no motive to impose upon my friends.

"Religion is no imposture, heaven and hell are real, and the immortality of the soul as certain as the existence of the body. For a time we have officiously deluded and cheated ourselves out of religion and happiness; and God, who will not always be despised by his creatures, has chosen me as an example to you all, and a warning to the lazy and indifferent Christian. But who, alas, can write his own tragedy without tears, or copy out the seal of his own damnation without horror? That there is a God, I know, because I continually feel the effects of his wrath; that there is a *hell*, I am equally certain, having received an earnest of my inheritance there already in my breast; that there is a natural conscience, I now feel with horror and amazement, being continually upbraided by it with my impieties, and with all my sins brought to my remembrance. Why God has marked me out for an example of his vengeance, rather than you, or any other of our acquaintance, I presume is because I have been more religiously educated, and have done greater despite to the Spirit of grace. What egregious folly is it for dust and ashes to contend with its Creator, to question his justice, his power, yea, his very being; when at the same time, without this God, every such wretch would immediately fall into nothing, being without him not able to exist one moment! What vile ingratitude is it scurrilously to reflect on His religion, who died to reconcile such reflectors to himself!

"Do not mistake yourself; it is not a light matter to contend with the God of nature, to abuse religion, and deny its Author, and, what is worst of all, to apostatize from it, as I have done. God has met with me for it, after a long forbearance of my inveterate impiety and profaneness. Let me entreat you to leave off your sins: who knows but God may yet receive you? I speak not this out of any love to virtue, or hatred of vice—for I am hardened and impenitently reprobate—but, like Dives, I am unwilling my brethren should come into this place of torment. Make what use of this you please, only remember, if it does not reclaim, it will enhance your guilt, possibly to be overtaken in this world, as I am, by the just judgment of God; if not, be sure you will be met with hereafter.

"Which is all from," etc.

As soon as the letter was read and sent, the night being far worn, we all took our leave of him, wishing him good rest and a happier condition the next day. To which he replied, "Gentlemen, I thank you, but my happiness is at an end; and as for my rest to-night, thus I spend the little remainder of my miserable moments. All the ease I expect will be wishing for the day, as in the daytime I wish for the night, and in a fearful expectation of my dissolution, and the account I must make upon it. But, gentlemen, good night to you; and remember me, to confirm you in the religion I have disowned, that you may stand more cautiously by my folly, and secure the happiness I have forfeited."

The next day came several of his friends out of the country. Having had an account of his circumstances, one of them told him that he and several more of his relations

came to town, and were sorry to find him in so weak a condition as he appeared to be in, for now he was nothing but skin and bone, the agonies he lay under doing the work of the quickest consumption.

He answered, "I am obliged in common civility to thank you all; but who are my relations? Our Saviour said, such as did the will of his heavenly Father were his relations. I may properly say, that none but the atheist, the reprobate, and such as do the work of the devil, are my relations. This little tie of flesh and blood will dissolve in a moment, but the relation I have with the damned is permanent. The same lot, the same place of torment, the same exercise of blasphemy, and the same eternity of horror, will be the common lot of us all; so the similitude of torments, place, and duration, will join us in a very strict union."

His friends, who only had heard he was distracted, hearing him deliver himself in such terms, were amazed, and began to inquire of some of us what made him talk at such a rate. He, hearing them whispering together, and imagining the cause, called them all to him, and said,

"You imagine me melancholy or distracted; I wish I were either; but it is a part of my judgment that I am not. No: my apprehension of persons and things is rather more quick and vigorous than it was when I was in perfect health; and it is my curse, because thereby I am more sensible of the condition I am fallen into. Would you be informed why I am become a skeleton in three or four days? See how then I have despised my Maker, and denied my Redeemer; I have joined myself to the atheists and profane, and continued this course under many convictions, till my iniquity was ripe for vengeance, and the just judgments of

God overtook me, when my security was the greatest, and the checks of my conscience were the least. Since I have denied that salvation which cometh by Jesus Christ, there is no other mediator or intercessor for sinners; if there be, which is he that can redeem my soul from hell, or give a ransom for my life? No, no; 'if we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation to consume the adversary.' 'There remains no more sacrifice for sin,' that is the wound that pierces my soul. Christ Jesus was the only expiatory sacrifice God would accept; I not accepting—I would say, I despising this, there remains no other for me to accept of, no other to make atonement and satisfaction for me; 'there is no other name given under heaven but the name of Jesus, whereby we may be saved:' and it is that Jesus whom I have reproached, and ridiculed, and abused in his members; nay, to whom I have induced others to do the same.

"Methinks your breasts all are open to me, and in the midst of your pity and surprise, you would bid me hope, and believe, and supplicate the mercy I have abused, because Jesus Christ came to save sinners, and to bring to repentance. In that I know all your thoughts. Alas, how fain would I hope and believe! Can a man in torments not desire to be freed from them? No, assure yourselves I would upon any terms; but the wrath of God obstructs the power of hoping and believing, and though I would, I can do neither. I know not what some divines mean, who say, *He that desires to repent, does it in some measure;* I experience the contrary. A fruitless wish that comes not into act, is no more than a conviction, which shall lay such persons under great condemnation. You would have me sup-

plicate that mercy I have abused. Alas, of that I have no hopes, but what depend upon abused mercy!

"But why said I hopes? I have no hopes! My hopes are frustrated, my expectations are cut off; and what remains behind? Why am I bid to hope and believe? Oh, what mockery is this upon me! To find me in misery, and bid me be happy, without affording me any power of being so! Indeed, should Jesus Christ say so to me, it would be comfort; but for you to say so, is the same thing as to bid a malefactor shake off his chains, and assume his liberty; or call upon the dead to rise out of their graves, and challenge their estates and honors again. How idle is it to bid the fire not burn, when fuel is administered; and to command the seas to be smooth in the midst of a storm! Such is my case; and what are the comforts of my friends? But I am spent, I can complain no more. Would to God that the cause of my complaining would cease! The cause of my complaining! this renews my grief, and summons up the little strength I have left, to complain again, like an expiring blaze, before it is extinguished. It is just so with me; but whither am I going?"

As he said this, he fainted away, and lay in a swoon for a considerable time; but by the help of some spirits, we brought him to himself again. As soon as he had opened his eyes, he said, "Oh, cruel, unkind friends, to awaken me from a dream, in which I had a cessation from my torments!" This he spoke with so lively a concern, that no one could refrain from tears. "You weep," said he, "but your tears come too late. Was I like another person that goes out of the world, it would be one of my greatest troubles to see you weep, or, at best, it would add to my pains; for he must be unnatural and senseless that would not be troub-

led at the afflictions of others, especially his friends and relations. But the case is otherwise with me. My cup is full, and runs over already; the bitterness of my soul is as great as it possibly can be in this world; my heart is full of horror and anguish; no grief can add to mine, being so great that it is incapable of receiving more. Perhaps this may seem a paradox to you at first; but what think you of time, and eternity, which comprehends and swallows up all time? Can any one add any thing to the wrath of God, which includes the fury of devils and men? this being derivative from, and independent of that. And can any one add to my grief and torture, who am fallen into the hands of the living God? No, no; reserve your tears for your sins, and cast them not away upon one who is neither the better nor the worse for them."

You may easily imagine what impressions this would make upon the spirits of his friends. However, in the midst of their grief and amazement, they had the prudence to think of the reputation of their family, and to provide for as much secresy as was possible. They therefore conveyed him by night to new lodgings. But he was grown so weak that he fainted several times in the chair; they got him into his chamber, and to bed as soon as they could. After a little rest, he yet found strength to express himself thus:

"I am not concerned to know whither you have brought me, or your reasons for so doing. It had been something, if you had changed my state with my lodgings; but my torments are greater than before, for I see that dismal hour just at hand, when I must bid you all farewell."

The physicians were now sent for again, but they still declared they could do nothing for him; only they ordered

him some cordial julep, which they said might strengthen nature to hold out two or three days longer.

My business calling me away for a day or two, I came again on Thursday morning, pretty early. When I came in, I inquired of his friends how he had spent his time. They told me he had had little company, and his expressions were much shorter than before; but what he did speak, seemed to have in it more horror and despair. I went to his bedside and asked him how he did.

He replied, "Damned, and lost for ever!" I told him the decrees of God were secret; perhaps he was punished in this life, to fit him for a better. He answered, "They are not secret to me, but discovered; and my greatest torment, my punishment here, is for an example to others. Oh, that there was no God, or that this God could cease to be, for I am sure he will have no mercy upon me!" "Alas," said I, "there is no contending with our Creator, and therefore avoid such words as may provoke him more." "True," replied he, "there is no contending: I wish there were a possibility of getting above God: that would be a heaven to me." I entreated him not to give way to such blasphemous thoughts, for—— Here he interrupted me. "Read we not in the Revelation of them that blasphemed God, because of their pains? I am one of their number. Oh how do I envy the happiness of Cain and Judas!" "But," replied I, "you are yet alive, and do not feel the torments of those that are in hell."

He answered, "This is either true or false: if it be true, how heavy will those torments be, of which I do not yet feel the uttermost! But I know it is false, and that I endure more than the spirits of the damned; for I have the very same torture upon my spirits that they have, besides

those I endure in my body. I believe, at the day of judgment, the torments of my mind and body will both together be more intense; but as I now am, no spirit in hell endures what I do. How gladly would I change my condition for hell! How earnestly would I entreat my angry Judge to send me thither, were I not afraid that out of vengeance he would deny me!" Here he closed his eyes a little, and began to talk very wildly, every now and then groaning and gnashing his teeth; but soon after, opening his eyes, he grew sensible again, and felt his own pulse, saying, "How lazily my minutes go on! When will be the last breath, the pulse that shall beat my spirit out of this decayed mansion into the desired regions of death and hell? Oh, I find it is just now at hand! and what shall I say now? Am not I afraid to die? Ah, the forlorn hopes of him that has not God to go to! Nothing to fly to for peace and comfort!" Here his speech failed him; we all believing him to be dying, went to prayer, which threw him into an agony; in which, though he could not speak, he turned away his face, and made what noise he could, to hinder himself from hearing. Perceiving this, we gave over.

As soon as he could speak—which was not till after some time—he said, "Tigers and monsters, are ye also become devils to torment me, and give me a prospect of heaven, to make my hell more intolerable?"

"Alas, sir," said I, "it is our desire of your happiness that casts us down to the throne of grace: if God denies assistance, who else can give it? If he will not have mercy, whither must we go for it?"

He replied, "Oh, that is the dart that wounds me! God is become my enemy, and there is none so strong as to deliver me out of his hands. He consigns me over to eter-

nal vengeance, and there is none able to redeem me! Was there such another God as he, who would patronize my cause; or was I above God, or independent of him; could I act or dispose of myself as I pleased, then would my horrors cease, and the expectations and designs of my formidable enemies be frustrated. But, oh! this cannot be, for I ———"

His voice failed again, and he began to struggle and gasp for breath; which having recovered, with a groan so dreadful and horrid, as if it had been more than human, he cried out, "OH, THE UNSUFFERABLE PANGS OF HELL AND DAMNATION!" and then expired.

How terrible are the judgments of God, even of that God who delighteth in mercy! He who encourages returning sinners with the most gracious promises of mercy, threatens the impenitent with the most fearful denunciations of wrath. To the one he says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" to the other, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish."

Is there, then, no mercy for a sinner, who earnestly desires to fly unto Christ and his salvation in his dying moments? There is one such instance of repentance and pardon given us in the Bible—that of the penitent thief upon the cross: there is, however, only one; and it has been well observed, "There is one example of this nature, that none need despair; and but one, that none might presume." Remember, that in the midst of life you are in death; that you may be called away in a moment, without time even to utter a wish for mercy. Delay not. Presume not that there will be time for you to repent and call for mercy by and by, if you neglect it now.

CHRIST IN JUDGMENT.

Day of judgment, day of wonders!
Hark! the trumpet's awful sound,
Louder than a thousand thunders,
Shakes the vast creation round!
How the summons
Will the sinner's heart confound!

See the Judge our nature wearing,
Cloth'd in majesty divine!
You who long for his appearing
Then shall say, "This God is mine."
Gracious Saviour,
Own me in that day for thine!

At his call the dead awaken,
Rise to life from earth and sea;
All the powers of nature, shaken
By his looks, prepare to flee:
Careless sinner,
What will then become of thee?

Horrors, past imagination,
Will surprise your trembling heart,
When you hear your condemnation—
"Hence, accursed wretch, depart!
Thou with Satan
And his angels have thy part!"

But to those who have confessed,
Lov'd and serv'd the Lord below,
He will say, "Come near, ye blessed,
See the kingdom I bestow;
You, for ever,
Shall my love and glory know."

Under sorrows and reproaches,
May this thought our courage raise,
Swiftly God's great day approaches—
Sighs shall then be chang'd to praise:
We shall triumph
When the world is in a blaze.

Newton.

No. 143.

ON

EARLY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

BY REV. DANIEL HUNTINGTON.

Fathers and Mothers—Permit a friend to your best interests to address you plainly and affectionately on a subject of the highest importance. I plead the cause of those to whom your hearts are attached by the strongest ties—whose bodies and souls the God of nature and of grace hath committed to your care, and who, under God, depend on you for every thing precious in time and eternity. Will you not give the subject the regard of a serious and prayerful mind?

The comprehensive precept of St. Paul to the Ephesians is, "*Ye fathers*"—*or parents*, for both are evidently interested in the direction—"*provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*" Eph. 6 : 4. This passage is of high authority, and of extensive import. A complete illustration of it will not be attempted in these few pages. Some general observations only can be made, in answer to the inquiries which may be supposed to arise in the mind of every serious parent, on perusing it. "In what way am I liable to provoke my children to wrath; and what is implied in bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?"

The first, or cautionary clause of the passage before us relates principally to the mode and degree in which parental authority is exercised. This authority, though of a

very general and discretionary kind, is not unlimited. Like every similar trust, it may be, and often is exceeded or abused; and this is done whenever parents use unjust, unnecessary, unseasonable, or excessive severity, in domestic discipline. Some indeed have excluded every thing of a compulsory nature from their system of family government, and profess to rely wholly on the power of persuasion and example. But this system, I conceive, is unscriptural and fallacious. It is directly opposed to the dictates of that divine wisdom which has declared, "He that spareth the rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes." If children came into the world without any corrupt propensity, as some suppose they do, then the work of education would be light and sweet indeed. Small were the labor, and sure the reward, of sowing good seed in a vacant soil. But such is not the human mind. The stones and weeds and thorns of vice have preöccupied the ground; and these will require of him who cultivates it, vigorous and persevering exertions, without which it will never produce the fruits of holiness. It is false tenderness which withholds correction from youthful or even *infantile* errors. *Real benevolence,* in all its exercises, regards the *character* of its object. To praise the blameworthy is as unkind as to blame the praiseworthy. The misapplication, either of rewards or of punishments, is essentially unjust; and as enlightened affection will not obstruct innocent enjoyment, so neither will it withhold a salutary pain.

Let parents, therefore, beware of that dangerous partiality which would make them blind to the native depravity of their children; and which would consequently lead them to rely on feebler means than God has appointed for their improvement. Let them remember that "foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child," and that "the rod of correction" is necessary to "drive it far from him." Of that true love, which will ever influence to the observance of this inspired counsel, our heavenly Father has conde-

scended to exhibit himself as an example. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." His benevolence regards the character of his adopted family, and is manifested in all those chastenings which "for the present are not joyous, but grievous;" but which his wisdom sees necessary to produce "the peaceable fruits of righteousness."

Having premised these things to show that something in the way of punishment may be requisite to the due maintenance of parental authority, I return to a foregoing remark, and observe,

1. The exercise of this authority must always be regulated by *justice;* otherwise it will but provoke children to wrath, instead of correcting their tempers or habits. A sense of justice is implanted, by the Creator, in the breast of every rational creature; and the youngest child, in whom the exercise of the mental faculties has commenced, intuitively knows that suffering is the proper consequence of doing evil, and of that only. If, then, you inflict bodily or mental pain on your children without manifest cause, you will but irritate their passions, lose their confidence, and discourage their exertions. This is done when punishment is inflicted, or displeasure expressed, on the mere suspicion of a fault, or for inattention to a command or prohibition which was in itself unreasonable. The forcible maintenance of one requisition which is contrary to Scripture, or unsupported by the plain dictates of common sense, will do much to alienate the child's affections and weaken the parent's authority; *every* exercise of which will then bear something of that odious character which perhaps *one* only has deserved. But,

2. It is not enough that severity be just. You must be well assured that it is *necessary*, before you use it. Guard equally against that overweening tenderness which can never see the necessity of punishment, and that gross and hasty authority which is supported exclusively by the rod. Some

parents seem to prefer this mode of government because it is the *shortest*, and to them the most *convenient*. But they should consider that it is a very insufficient, and often a very injurious one. Though the fault committed may be such that severe punishment could not be called *unjust*, yet, if expostulation, reproof, or any milder method of treatment would have availed to produce in the child the sentiment of real regret, and the resolution of amendment, that method were certainly preferable; nor ought severity to be ever used, until every gentler method has been tried in vain. For if the child receives the idea that such severity is chosen as more congenial to the feelings of his parent, he will inwardly resent it: it will irritate, grieve, and discourage him; because it deprives him of an opportunity for voluntary confession and amendment, and almost compels him to regard his parent as an enemy, who finds pleasure in his pain. It is highly important not only that punishment should be just and necessary, but also that it should evidently *appear so* to the subject of it; else, instead of having a salutary influence, it will but provoke him to wrath. I add, therefore,

3. It should not be *unseasonable*. The *time* of uttering reproof, or inflicting punishment, is of much consequence. It should not be too early or too late. Few parents, however, err by too much delay in expressing their displeasure at the faults of their children. The generality are rather in haste to do it: either because they think that punishment will be more effectual if it immediately follow the fault; or because, during the irritation of their own minds, which the fault has produced, they find it *easier* for them to inflict it.

The first of these reasons is founded in error. It is not true that punishment is generally more effectual for coming immediately upon the commission of a fault; on the contrary, I would recommend, in most cases, that *some hours*, at least, be suffered to intervene. This will give the offender a proper opportunity for reflection on his conduct; which, aided by the faithful representations of the parent, will gen-

erally lead to conviction of his demerit—a conviction highly important to the salutary effect of punishment. Such delay will also enable the parent to form a more accurate judgment of the case, and give him opportunity to use those milder means of reformation which should always precede actual punishment. Thus will he most successfully avoid the use of *unjust* or *unnecessary* severity, against which we are cautioned by the apostle.

But some parents may prefer the immediate infliction of punishment for the other reason which was mentioned: "I cannot," one may say, "summon resolution to correct my children, if I wait till the anger which the offence excites has subsided. I must do it while my feelings are warm and powerful, or else the resentment which I would express is easily overcome, and I make a mere mock of punishment." But surely those who plead such a necessity are unfit to exercise parental authority at all. Never attempt the correction of your children under the influence of anger. Wherever this passion exists, it is visible; and wherever it is visible, it must effectually frustrate the design of parental chastisement, which should proceed from a principle, and be accompanied by expressions of love. A parent cannot take a more direct method to provoke his children to wrath, than to exercise his power over them while he is himself under its impulse. Haste in the infliction of punishment also leads to another evil, which may be considered as included in the apostle's caution.

4. I mean *excessive* severity. Whatever is done in haste, is liable to be done wrong; and this is peculiarly true with respect to the exercise of parental authority. As domestic government is not administered by the aid of explicit and particular laws, but rests much in the discretion of the parent, great care is necessary in proportioning the measure of restrictive or punitive power which is used, to the exigency or importance of the occasion which calls for it. Perhaps the substance of this observation has been in part

anticipated ; for it is evident that, so far as the exercise of authority exceeds the occasion, it must be considered *unnecessary* and *unjust;* and certainly it must be very dangerous in its tendency to those by whom it is felt. If prohibitions and reproofs are multiplied on unimportant subjects, they must tend to weaken parental influence when exerted on subjects of real importance. He who aims too high, as well as he who aims too low, will assuredly miss the mark. Let your domestic regulations be as *few* and *simple,* and the claims of your authority as moderate, as they consistently may be ; but whenever they are resisted, let them be maintained with calmness and gentleness, but with unshaken resolution.

Thus much must suffice by way of caution against the abuse of parental authority. Those who wish to see this, as well as the succeeding branches of my subject, more fully and ably discussed, will do well to consult Babington's "Practical View of Christian Education," and the anonymous "Hints on Early Education and Nursery Discipline," both of which are worthy the serious and careful perusal of all to whom the "nurture and admonition" of young immortals is committed.

To proceed, then, with the PRECEPTIVE part of my subject, let me observe,

1. In order to bring up your children in a proper manner, you must *early and carefully study their dispositions.* Common observation must convince any one, that there is often a very considerable variety, in this respect, among children of the same family. The temper of one, for instance, is warm and irritable, but pliant and manageable: that of another is comparatively cool and equal, but obstinate and unyielding. One is distinguished by timidity and tenderness of mind; another, by fortitude and firmness. These and other distinguishing traits of character very early appear, and should be carefully observed ; as the knowledge

of them may assist much in the proper discharge of every parental duty. Children require to be taught and governed very differently, according as they vary in their characteristic propensities, the degree of their susceptibility, or the measure of their capacity. A topic of instruction which would interest and enlarge the mind of one, would but confuse and discourage another. That which, to one, would be but wholesome and necessary restraint, might, on another, have all the effect of tyranny and oppression. While one requires severe chastisement, another would be sufficiently corrected, for the same offence, by a word or a look. It scarcely need be added, that parents, in observing these varieties of talent and disposition, should carefully guard against the slightest appearance of partiality; that all the distinctions which they make among their children, in consideration of age, sex, or character, may appear to be just and necessary: otherwise their labor will be worse than lost.

Having acquired that knowledge of the characters of your children which is here recommended, you will be prepared,

2. To *regulate their tempers.* That this may be in a great measure effected, experience and observation abundantly show. It is not indeed in the power of any parent to destroy the seeds of sin in the hearts of his offspring. But he may resist and check, in a considerable degree, its growth. Whatever be the passion or propensity, in which natural corruption makes its earliest or most evident appearance, against *that* should parental influence be immediately and constantly directed. Do not argue that, because you cannot do every thing which you wish, therefore you are to do nothing. The Divine Spirit usually operates by means; and the most hopeful means of correcting the irregular propensities of our fallen nature are placed within the reach of parents. As noxious plants are most easily destroyed while just springing from the ground, so timely

exertion may eradicate from the minds of children and youth those germs of vice, which otherwise will

"Grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength."

3. Therefore *early instruct your children in the truths and principles of religion.* Few, comparatively, seem to be sensible how *soon* the performance of this duty may be commenced. Young children cannot indeed be successfully or safely led into the depths of theology; but *some* knowledge of their Creator and his attributes may be communicated to them at a very early age. Before they can make any use of divine revelation, they may be taught to read lessons of important and delightful instruction in the book of nature; to discern much of the power, wisdom, and goodness, displayed in creation and providence; and to hear and lisp with reverence the name of the Maker, Preserver, and Proprietor of all things. To these principles of natural religion, may soon be added some of the plainest doctrines of revelation; for thence the parent, imitating, and depending upon the Spirit of wisdom, may take of the things of God and show them to his offspring, while yet they are unable to peruse the sacred pages for themselves. From the greatness and goodness of God, for example, as exhibited in creation and providence, he may take occasion to show the guilt and danger of offending him. These considerations will give weight to all the precepts of the moral law; from among which the judicious parent will select, as the theme of early instruction, those which are peculiarly adapted to the comprehension and use of his interesting pupils.

By the law is the knowledge of sin. A judicious application of the plain precepts of religion may therefore lead the young mind to perceive the necessity of a Saviour from sin and from death. The character of the Redeemer may then be delineated, and his work described; and thus the way is prepared for a gradual inculcation of all the im-

portant doctrines and duties of Christianity, as the age and capacity of the child may admit.

These hints are not designed to furnish a rule of religious education adapted to all cases; or to describe the order in which you should uniformly proceed in the work. If you are truly desirous to make your children acquainted with the way of life, you need not be at a loss for method or opportunity. The best general rule is, to begin with those truths which are most simple and easy to be apprehended, or those to which the inquiries of the child may first lead the way. But whatever method you may adopt, or whatever order you may observe, in giving religious instruction to your children, remember that "Christ crucified" is the grand pervading subject of divine revelation, the Alpha and Omega of that word of truth, through which God's people are to be renewed and sanctified. Let it then be your chief object to make them familiar with the history and character of their Redeemer: lead them to his lowly cradle—rehearse all the interesting particulars recorded of his childhood and his youth—exhibit his peculiar tenderness to the young, his condescension to the obscure and the ignorant—his compassion to the indigent and the afflicted—and, above all, his boundless love to sinners, as expressed upon the cross. Teach them with all possible plainness the connection between their sins and his sufferings, and the absolute necessity of those sufferings for the salvation of their souls. In short, teach them to "look on Him whom they have pierced," and you will take the most effectual method to promote, in their temper and deportment, "whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report."

Great assistance will also be derived from the use of those excellent catechisms, both of a historical and doctrinal kind, which may now be so easily obtained. To these should be added such other books as are adapted to the capacities of children and youth, and which are either professedly religious, or at least of a religious tendency. And great care

should be taken to keep out of their hands those trifling and corrupt publications with which the world abounds, and which are often so carelessly distributed among the rising generation, to debase and defile their young minds. As soon as children can read, they will, if possible, buy or borrow books of amusement; and as there are enough to be obtained, which combine amusement and instruction, their desire of them, though it should be regulated, should not be overcome. Instead of pampering the bodies of children with delicacies, as is the manner of some parents, we should encourage and reward their diligence and obedience, by giving them food for their minds. But let it be procured by a careful hand; for food and poison are often exposed to sale on the same shelf. He who deals in them, disposes of both with equal satisfaction; and, having obtained his profits, inquires not after the moral health of his customers. On this account, parents should not furnish their children with money to purchase books for themselves. They will easily be satisfied with the selection of a riper judgment, if they are not carried to the bookstore to assist in the choice, and thus to bewilder their minds amidst an endless variety. I hope it will not be thought that this subject is magnified above its real importance. It is well known that those ideas and impressions which are earliest received are longest retained. It is surely of great consequence, therefore, that the first books for children be such as tend to promote the interests of morality and piety; for otherwise they must powerfully counteract the influence of the most faithful parental instructions.

4. In order to give the best effect to domestic instruction and discipline, precept must be constantly illustrated and enforced by a consistent *example*. This remark applies to the most minute particulars of our daily deportment; *all* of which are more closely observed by children than parents generally seem to suppose; and *each* of which contributes its proportion to those ideas of good and evil, of right and

wrong, which their young minds are constantly acquiring. On this subject I would willingly enlarge; but my limits forbid. Whatever of principle or duty you wish to inculcate on your children, remember that "actions speak louder than words," and that all your *counsels* and *directions* will go for nothing, if contradicted by your *life*.

5. Finally: *Pray with and for your children.* If this parental duty be neglected, I venture to say all others will be but ill-performed, if performed at all: the hearts of your children are in the hands of God, and he alone can render your efforts for their salvation effectual. All those efforts, therefore, must be made in his strength, and accompanied by devout acknowledgments of your dependence on his grace. Nothing can have a more direct tendency to impress on the minds of children a sense of the excellent nature and indispensable obligations of religion, than a regular maintenance of family worship. *Regular* I say, for unless it be so, the good effect of example is in a great measure lost. The exercises of family devotion, when becomingly performed, are calculated to give greater dignity to the parental character, and greater weight to parental authority, than any thing besides. Children can hardly fail to reverence, love, and obey those parents who appear to be thus solicitous for their temporal and eternal welfare, and to hold such exalted intercourse with the King of heaven.

Permit me also to suggest the importance of leading children to the throne of grace in a more private manner, as well as in the regular exercises of family devotion. Should you occasionally draw your offspring into retirement, and there, having affectionately and solemnly set before them the nature of the relation which subsists between you, and the duties which you owe each other, your fellow-creatures, and your God, cause them to kneel down with you in the presence of their heavenly Father, while you implore for them the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Spirit of grace, in the name of a crucified Redeemer, the happiest

effects may be expected to follow. This practice is especially recommended whenever any fault has been committed, or any difficulty has arisen among them, which calls for the interference of parental authority.

You should not only pray with and for your children, collectively and singly, but also teach them to pray for themselves. Early accustom them to retire regularly for this purpose. Furnish them with suitable forms of prayer, in the commencement of the practice; and assist them, by plain and familiar instruction, gradually to lay their forms aside, and to express their wants and desires in their own simple language. Do not apologize for the neglect of this duty, by the stale plea that *you are afraid of making them hypocrites.* They may, and while unrenewed they will be actuated by wrong motives in the performance of every outward duty; yet duty must be inculcated. To pray without the spirit and the understanding is sinful; and so is it to "restrain prayer:" you are not to take your *choice* of the evils for your children, but do your utmost to avoid them *both.*

To this faint outline of parental duty, I might add many MOTIVES to the faithful discharge of it. But can this be necessary? Will it not offend you? Will you not think I deeply wrong you, in supposing that you can be unmindful of the highest interest of those who are bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh; and whose derivation from you, and dependence upon you, give them the strongest claim to your unremitting care and solicitude? Indeed, I would willingly rest in the conclusion, that nothing of the kind which I now propose is requisite; and that no parent, at least no professedly *Christian* parent, can be found, so inconsistent as practically to "deny the faith," by giving less diligence to "provide for his own" the bread of eternal life, than to furnish their daily table with the sustenance of a mortal frame. But, alas! facts are stubborn things. Multitudes

of children are evidently growing up like heathen in this Christian land; and too many instances are to be found, in which the offspring of those professing godliness are suffered to remain as ignorant of the Scriptures, as ungoverned in their tempers, and as irregular in their habits, as those whose parents make no pretension to religious principle. Such solemn and sorrowful facts must be my apology for *closing* this Tract with a few inducements to the faithful discharge of parental duty. Consider, then,

1. The duty of bringing up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, results from a divine *command*. You have before you the express will of God on this subject, and in a requisition, too, which makes a constant appeal to the tenderest feelings of your hearts. Why has our Creator established this interesting relation, made children thus dependent on their parents, and implanted in their breasts those tender sympathies which render this dependence a source of the most refined pleasure to both? It is to strengthen the bond of religious obligation, and facilitate the performance of those important duties, in the discharge of which the rising generation are to be trained up for his service. The fowls of the air and the beasts of the field protect and provide for their young a few weeks or days, and then their connection is dissolved, and their relation forgotten. But the offspring of a human pair demand protecting and providing care for years. Wherefore is this difference made? It is because the latter have *souls* as well as *bodies* to be provided for, and it is fit that the strength of their attachment should bear some proportion to the importance of their claim. The doctrine that children do best when their minds are unbiassed by religious instruction, and uncurbed by parental authority, is a specimen of that "wisdom of the world" which "is foolishness with God." The invariable dictate of inspired Wisdom is, "train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

2. The good of your children requires that they be brought up *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* Should you find a parent totally neglectful of the temporal wants of his offspring, turning a deaf ear to their earnest cries for shelter, food, and raiment, or contenting himself with cold *wishes* for their support and comfort—saying, "be ye warmed and filled," and yet using no exertions to obtain for them those things which are needful to the body—would not your pity and indignation be at once excited? Certainly you would consider the character of such a parent altogether *monstrous* and *abominable*—and *justly* too. What then must be thought of the parent who, while he provides for the mortal bodies, neglects the immortal souls of his children—who exhibits no concern for their spiritual welfare—or who, though he may express a *wish* for their salvation, will not be at any pains to use the appointed means of effecting it? You can indeed *only* use means. You cannot renew and sanctify the hearts of your children; yet surely there is the greatest encouragement to the use of those means which God has appointed, and which, when *faithfully* employed, he has promised to bless. When you consider also that your children have derived their corrupt nature from you, Psa. 51: 5, you must surely feel yourselves bound to do every thing in your power for their recovery from that degradation and misery into which our race has fallen.

Lay then, I beseech you, these things to heart. Consider well the consequences of doing or neglecting your duty in this respect. Anticipate the *joy* or the *sorrow* which you will procure to yourselves, and the endless *good* or *evil* which you may bring upon your precious offspring.

How exalted must be the pleasure of one who has carefully brought up his children for the service of God, when, as he declines into the vale of years, he looks around him, and beholds the blessed fruit of his labors, example, and prayers, in their pious, honorable, and useful lives! If he

be blessed with abundance, how pleasing the thought that the portion* of it which he leaves behind him, will be in the hands of those whom he has taught to feel their accountability, as stewards of the divine bounty, and who will hopefully employ it for the glory of God and the good of their fellow-men. Or if he feel in his old age the cold blast of adversity, how doubly welcome the shelter, the table, and the couch, which his own good counsel has assisted to provide, and to which the voice of filial love and gratitude invites him!

On the other hand, what pain and anguish may every unfaithful parent anticipate from the situation and conduct of his children! Have these pages met the eye of such an one? Oh, let me expostulate—let me appeal to your conscience on this infinitely important subject. Suppose—and the case is not at all improbable—that one of those intrusted to your care should be suddenly arrested by a mortal disease. You call for medical aid, and while the physicians sit in council, your mind tremblingly vibrates between hope and fear. At length the melancholy, the awful decision is announced—the malady is too deeply rooted for the reach of human skill; and you must prepare to part with an object, around which the finest fibres of your heart are twined. But the preparation of *your* mind is not all that is necessary. While that much-loved frame returns to the dust as it was, the *spirit* must return to God who gave it. And how is it fitted for the solemn summons? Your child, perhaps, has reached the end of eight, ten, or twelve years. Has he an interest in Christ? Has he hopefully repented of sin, and sought the grace of the Redeemer? Has he been well

* I say the *portion* of it, because I do not think it consistent that Christians should hoard up great wealth for their children, when the calls for religious charity are so loud and affecting. Lend, without delay or grudging, to the Lord. Thus you will make the safest investment of your funds, and lay up for yourselves and families the best inheritance.

instructed as to the nature of sin, the character and will of God, and the way of salvation? Has he enjoyed the benefit of family devotion and parental example? Alas, all these questions must be answered in the negative. The precious opportunity for parental instruction has passed away without improvement; and now the only hope—and that a forlorn one—is, that a few moments' diligence may compensate for the negligence of years! In such sad and discouraging circumstances, the pastor is called to build where no foundation has been laid—to sow the seed of the word in a soil which has never been prepared. Should you be brought into such circumstances, would not your heart upbraid you? What would you not then give for the testimony of a good conscience, to support you to the throne of grace, bearing thither in the arms of faith an expiring child!

To conclude—remember, I entreat you, that however smoothly you may pass through this life in the neglect of parental duty, you must meet your children before the judgment-seat of Christ. Though the relations and connections which subsist among us in this life will then have been dissolved, I doubt not they will be called to most solemn recollection. How pure and exalted, then, must be *their* joy, who welcome to the right hand of the Judge those perfected spirits, whom they, in the faithful discharge of parental duty, were instrumental in preparing for the services, the felicities, and the glories of heaven! But oh, with what emotions of shame, remorse, and horror, must faithless parents meet their offspring on that dreadful day! How will they stand together, to receive the sentence of everlasting banishment and "destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power"—and how will their *eternity* be employed!

No. 144.

CONVERSION

OF

PRESIDENT EDWARDS.

FROM A NARRATIVE WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

I had a variety of concerns and exercises about my soul from my childhood; but had two more remarkable seasons of awakening before I met with that change by which I was brought to those new dispositions, and that new sense of things, that I have since had. The first time was when I was a boy, some years before I went to college, at a time of remarkable awakening in my father's congregation. I was then very much affected for many months, and concerned about the things of religion and my soul's salvation, and was abundant in religious duties. I used to pray five times a day in secret, and to spend much time in religious conversation with other boys, with whom I used frequently to meet for prayer. I experienced I know not what kind of delight in religion. My mind was much engaged in it, and had much self-righteous pleasure; and it was my delight to abound in religious duties. I joined with some of my schoolmates and built a booth in a swamp, in a very retired spot, for a place of prayer. And besides, I had particular secret places of my own in the woods, where I used to retire by myself; and was from time to time much affected. My affections were lively and easily moved, and I seemed to be in my element when engaged in religious duties. And I am ready to think, many are deceived with such affections, and such a kind of delight as I then had in religion, and mistake it for grace.

But in process of time, my convictions and affections wore off; and I entirely lost all those affections and delights, and left off secret prayer, at least as to any constant

performance of it; and returned like a dog to his vomit, and went on in the ways of sin. Indeed I was at times very uneasy, especially towards the latter part of my time at college; when it pleased God to seize me with the pleurisy, in which he brought me nigh to the grave, and shook me over the pit of hell. And yet, it was not long after my recovery before I fell again into my old ways of sin. But God would not suffer me to go on with any quietness; I had great and violent inward struggles, till, after many conflicts with wicked inclinations, repeated resolutions, and bonds that I laid myself under by a kind of vows to God, I was brought wholly to break off all former wicked ways, and all ways of known outward sin; and to apply myself to seek salvation, and practise many religious duties; but without that kind of affection and delight which I had formerly experienced. My concern now wrought more by inward struggles and conflicts, and self-reflections. I made seeking my salvation the main business of my life. But yet, it seems to me, I sought it after a miserable manner; which has made me sometimes since to question, whether ever it issued in that which was saving, being ready to doubt whether such miserable seeking ever succeeded. I was indeed brought to seek salvation in a manner that I never was before; I felt a spirit to part with all things in the world for an interest in Christ. My concern continued and prevailed, with many exercising thoughts and inward struggles; but yet it never seemed to be proper to express that concern by the name of terror.

From my childhood up, my mind had been full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty. But I remember the time very well when I seemed to be convinced, and fully satisfied as to this sovereignty; yet I never could give an account how, or by what means I was thus convinced, not in the least imagining at the time, nor a long time after, that there was any extraordinary influence of God's Spirit in it; but only that now I saw further,

and my reason apprehended the justice and reasonableness of it. However, my mind rested in it; and it put an end to all those cavils and objections. And there has been a wonderful alteration in my mind, with respect to God's sovereignty, from that day to this; so that I scarce ever have found so much as the rising of an objection against it. But I have often, since that first conviction, had quite another kind of sense of it than I had then. I have often since had not only a conviction, but a delightful conviction. The doctrine has very often appeared exceedingly pleasant, bright and sweet. But my first conviction was not so.

The first instance that I remember of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things that I have lived much in since, was on reading those words, *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.* 1 Tim. 1 : 17. As I read the words, there came into my soul, and was as it were diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense, quite different from any thing I ever experienced before. Never any words of Scripture seemed to me as these words did. I thought within myself, how excellent a Being that was, and how happy I should be, if I might enjoy that God and be rapt up to him in heaven, and be as it were swallowed up in him for ever! I kept saying over these words of Scripture to myself; and went to pray to God that I might enjoy him, and prayed in a manner quite different from what I used to do, with a new sort of affection. But it never came into my thoughts that there was any thing spiritual, or of a saving nature in this.

From about that time I began to have a new kind of apprehension and idea of Christ, and the work of redemption and the glorious way of salvation by him. An inward, sweet sense of these things at times came into my heart, and my soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them. And my mind was greatly engaged to

spend my time in reading and meditating on Christ, on the beauty and excellency of his person, and the lovely way of salvation by free grace in him. I found no books so delightful to me as those that treated of these subjects. Those words used to be abundantly with me, *I am the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the valleys.* Cant. 2 : 1. The words seemed to me sweetly to represent the loveliness and beauty of Jesus Christ. The whole book of Canticles used to be pleasant to me, and I used to be much in reading it about that time ; and found, from time to time, an inward sweetness that would carry me away in my contemplations. This I know not how to express otherwise than by a calm, delightful abstraction of the soul from all the concerns of this world ; and sometimes a kind of vision, or fixed ideas and imaginations of being alone in the mountains or some solitary wilderness, far from all mankind, sweetly conversing with Christ, and rapt and swallowed up in God. The sense I had of divine things would often of a sudden kindle up an ardor in my soul that I know not how to express.

Not long after I began to experience these things I gave an account to my father of some things that had passed in my mind. I was much affected by the discourse we had together ; and when it was ended I walked abroad alone, in a solitary place in my father's pasture, for contemplation. And as I was walking there, and looking up on the sky and clouds, there came into my mind a sweet sense of the glorious *majesty* and *grace* of God, that I know not how to express. I seemed to see them both in a sweet conjunction ; majesty and meekness joined together ; it was a sweet, and gentle, and holy majesty ; and also a majestic meekness ; a high, great, and holy gentleness.

After this my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of every thing was altered ; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, beauti-

ful appearance of divine glory in almost every thing. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love seemed to appear in every thing; in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds, and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, and trees; in the water, and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind. I often used to sit and view the moon for a long time; and in the day spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the glory of God in these things; in the meantime singing forth, with a low voice, my contemplations of the Creator and Redeemer. Scarcely any thing, among all the works of nature, was so delightful to me as thunder and lightning: formerly, nothing had been so terrible to me. Before, I used to be uncommonly terrified with thunder, and to be struck with terror when I saw a thunder-storm rising; but now, on the contrary, it rejoiced me. I felt God, if I may so speak, at the first appearance of a thunder-storm, and used to take the opportunity, at such times, to fix myself in order to view the clouds, and see the lightnings play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God's thunder, which oftentimes was exceedingly entertaining, leading me to sweet contemplations of my great and glorious God. While thus engaged, it always seemed natural for me to sing or chant forth my meditations; or to speak my thoughts in soliloquies with a singing voice.

I felt then great satisfaction as to my good state; but that did not content me. I had vehement longings of soul after God and Christ, and after more holiness, wherewith my heart seemed to be full, and ready to break; which often brought to my mind the words of the Psalmist, *My soul breaketh for the longing it hath.* Ps. 119 : 28. I often felt a mourning and lamenting in my heart, that I had not turned to God sooner, that I might have had more time to grow in grace. My mind was greatly fixed on divine things; I was almost perpetually in the contemplation of them. I spent most of my time in thinking of divine things,

year after year; often walking alone in the woods and solitary places, for meditation, soliloquy, and prayer, and converse with God; and it was always my manner, at such times, to sing forth my contemplations. I was almost constantly in ejaculatory prayer, wherever I was. Prayer seemed to be natural to me, as the breath by which the inward burnings of my heart had vent. The delights which I now felt in the things of religion were of an exceedingly different kind from those before mentioned, that I had when a boy, and what I then had no more notion of than one born blind has of pleasant and beautiful colors. They were of a more inward, pure, soul-animating, and refreshing nature. Those former delights never reached the heart, and did not arise from any sight of the divine excellency of the things of God, or any taste of the soul-satisfying and life-giving good there is in them.

My sense of divine things seemed gradually to increase for about a year and a half, when I went to preach at New-York, and while I was there I felt them very sensibly in a much higher degree than before. My longings after God and holiness were much increased. Pure and humble, holy and heavenly Christianity, appeared exceedingly amiable to me. I felt an ardent desire to be in every thing a complete christian, and conformed to the blessed image of Christ; and that I might live, in all things, according to the pure and blessed rules of the Gospel. I had an eager thirsting after progress in these things; which put me upon pursuing and pressing after them. It was my continual strife, day and night, and constant inquiry, how I should *be* more holy, and *live* more holily, and more becoming a child of God and a disciple of Christ. I now sought an increase of grace and holiness, and a holy life, with much more earnestness than ever I sought grace before I had it. I used to be continually examining myself, and studying and contriving for likely ways and means how I should live holily, with far greater diligence and earnest

ness than ever I pursued any thing in my life; but yet with too great a dependance on my own strength, which afterwards proved a great damage to me. My experience had not then taught me, as it has done since, my extreme feebleness and impotence, every manner of way, and the bottomless depths of secret corruption and deceit there were in my heart. However, I went on with my eager pursuit after more holiness and conformity to Christ.

The heaven I desired was a heaven of holiness: to be with God, and to spend my eternity in divine love and holy communion with Christ. My mind was very much taken up with contemplations of heaven and the enjoyments there, and living there in perfect holiness, humility, and love; and it used at that time to appear a great part of the happiness of heaven, that there the saints could express their love to Christ. It appeared to me a great clog and burden, that what I felt within I could not express as I desired. The inward ardor of my soul seemed to be hindered and pent up, and could not freely flame out as it would. I used often to think how in heaven this principle should freely and fully vent and express itself. Heaven appeared exceedingly delightful, as a world of love. It appeared to me that all happiness consisted in living in pure, humble, heavenly, divine love.

I remember the thoughts I used then to have of holiness, and said sometimes to myself, "I do certainly know that I love holiness, such as the Gospel prescribes." It appeared to me that there was nothing in it but what was ravishingly lovely; the highest beauty and amiableness—a *divine* beauty; far purer than any thing here upon earth; and that every thing else was like mire and defilement in comparison with it.

Holiness, as I then wrote down some of my contemplations on it, appeared to me to be of a sweet, pleasant, charming, serene, calm nature; which brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness, and ravishment to the soul. In other words, that it made the soul like a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant flow-

ers; all pleasant, delightful, and undisturbed; enjoying a sweet calm and the gently vivifying beams of the sun. The soul of a true christian, as I then wrote my meditations, appeared like such a little white flower as we see in the spring of the year; low and humble on the ground, opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory; rejoicing, as it were, in a calm rapture; diffusing around a sweet fragrancy; standing peacefully and lovingly in the midst of other flowers round about; all in like manner opening their bosoms to drink in the light of the sun. There was no part of creature holiness of which I had so great a sense of its loveliness as humility, brokenness of heart, and poverty of spirit; and there was nothing that I so earnestly longed for. My heart panted after this: to lie low before God, as in the dust; that I might be nothing, and that God might be ALL; that I might become as a little child.

While at New-York I was sometimes much affected with reflections on my past life, considering how late it was before I began to be truly religious; and how wickedly I had lived till then; and once so as to weep abundantly, and for a considerable time together.

On January 12, 1723, I made a solemn dedication of myself to God, and wrote it down: giving up myself, and all that I had to God; to be for the future in no respect my own; to act as one that had no right to himself, in any respect; and solemnly vowed to take God for my whole portion and felicity; looking on nothing else as any part of my happiness, nor acting as if it were; and his law for the constant rule of my obedience; engaging to fight, with all my might, against the world, the flesh, and the devil, to the end of my life. But I have reason to be infinitely humbled when I consider how much I have failed of answering my obligations.

I had then abundance of sweet religious conversation in the family where I lived, with Mr. John Smith and his pious mother. My heart was knit in affection to those in

whom were appearances of true piety; and I could bear the thoughts of no other companions but such as were holy, and the disciples of the blessed Jesus. I had great longings for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world; and my secret prayer used to be, in great part, taken up in praying for it. If I heard the least hint of any thing that happened, in any part of the world, that appeared, in some respect or other, to have a favorable aspect on the interests of Christ's kingdom, my soul eagerly seized upon it, and it would much animate and refresh me. I used to be eager to read public newspapers, mainly for that end; to see if I could not find some news favorable to the interests of religion in the world.

I very frequently used to retire into a solitary place, on the bank of Hudson's river, at some distance from the city, for contemplation on divine things, and secret converse with God; and had many delightful hours there. Sometimes Mr. Smith and I walked there together, to converse on the things of God; and our conversation used to turn much on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world, and the glorious things that God would accomplish for his church in the latter days. I had then, and at other times, the greatest delight in the holy Scriptures of any book whatsoever. Oftentimes, in reading it, every word seemed to touch my heart. I felt a harmony between something in my heart and those sweet and powerful words. I seemed often to see so much light exhibited by every sentence, and such a refreshing food communicated, that I could not get along in reading; often dwelling long on one sentence, to see the wonders contained in it; and yet almost every sentence seemed to be full of wonders.

I came away from New-York in the month of April, 1723, and had a most bitter parting with Mrs. Smith and her son. My heart seemed to sink within me at leaving the family and city where I had enjoyed so many sweet and pleasant days. I went from New-York to Wethersfield by water, and as I sailed away, I kept sight of the

city as long as I could. However, that night, after this sorrowful parting, I was greatly comforted in God at Westchester, where we went ashore to lodge, and had a pleasant time of it all the voyage to Saybrook. It was sweet to me to think of meeting dear christians in heaven, where we should never part more. At Saybrook we went ashore to lodge on Saturday, and there kept the Sabbath, where I had a sweet and refreshing season, walking alone in the fields.

After I came home to Windsor I remained much in a like frame of mind as when at New-York, only sometimes I felt my heart ready to sink with the thoughts of my friends at New-York. My support was in contemplations on the heavenly state, as I find in my Diary of May 1, 1723. It was a comfort to think of that state where there is fulness of joy; where reigns heavenly, calm, and delightful love, without alloy; where there are continually the dearest expressions of this love; where is the enjoyment of the persons loved, without ever parting; where those persons who appear so lovely in this world, will really be inexpressibly more lovely and full of love to us. And how sweetly will the mutual lovers join together to sing the praises of God and the Lamb! How will it fill us with rapture to think that this enjoyment, these sweet exercises, will never cease, but will last to all eternity!

I continued much in the same frame, in general, as when at New-York, till I went to New-Haven as tutor of the college, particularly once at Bolton, on a journey from Boston, while walking out alone in the fields. After I went to New-Haven I sunk in religion, my mind being diverted from my eager pursuits after holiness by some affairs that greatly perplexed and distracted my thoughts.

In September, 1725, I was taken ill at New-Haven, and while endeavoring to go home to Windsor, was so ill at the North Village that I could go no further, where I lay sick for about a quarter of a year. In this sickness God was pleased to visit me again with the sweet influ-

ences of his Spirit. My mind was greatly engaged there in divine and pleasant contemplations and longings of soul I observed that those who watched with me, would often be looking out wishfully for the morning, which brought to my mind those words of the Psalmist, and which my soul, with delight, made its own language, *My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning, I say, more than they that watch for the morning;* and when the light of day came in at the window it refreshed my soul from one morning to another. It seemed to be some image of the light of God's glory.

I remember, about that time, I used greatly to long for the conversion of some that I was concerned with; I could gladly honor them, and with delight be a servant to them, and lie at their feet, if they were but truly holy. But, some time after this I was again greatly diverted with some temporal concerns that exceedingly took up my thoughts, greatly to the wounding of my soul, and went on through various exercises that it would be tedious to relate, which gave me much more experience of my own heart than ever I had before.

Since I came to Northampton I have often had sweet complacency in God, in views of his glorious perfections and of the excellency of Jesus Christ. God has appeared to me a glorious and lovely being, chiefly on the account of his holiness. The holiness of God has always appeared to me the most lovely of all his attributes. The doctrines of God's sovereignty and free grace, in showing "mercy to whom he would show mercy," and man's absolute dependance on the operations of God's Holy Spirit, have very often appeared to me as sweet and glorious doctrines. These doctrines have been much my delight. God's sovereignty has ever appeared to me a great part of his glory. It has often been my delight to approach God, and adore him as a sovereign God, and ask sovereign mercy of him.

I have loved the doctrines of the Gospel; they have been to my soul like green pastures. The Gospel has

seemed to me the richest treasure, the treasure that I have most desired, and longed that it might dwell richly in me. The way of salvation by Christ has appeared glorious and excellent, most pleasant and most beautiful. It has often seemed to me that it would in a great measure spoil heaven to receive it in any other way. That text has often been affecting and delightful to me, "A man shall be a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest," &c. Isa. 32 : 2.

It has often appeared to me delightful to be united to Christ; to have him for my head, and to be a member of his body; also to have Christ for my teacher and prophet. I very often think, with longings and pantings of soul, of being a little child, taking hold of Christ, to be led by him through the wilderness of this world. That text, Matt. 18 : 3, has often been sweet to me, "Except ye be converted and become as little children," &c. I love to think of coming to Christ to receive salvation of him, poor in spirit and quite empty of self, humbly exalting him alone; cut off entirely from my own root, in order to grow into and out of Christ; to have God in Christ to be all in all; and to live by faith on the Son of God, a life of humble, unfeigned confidence in him. That Scripture has often been sweet to me, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake." Psalm 115 : 1. And those words of Christ, "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Luke, 10 : 21. That sovereignty of God which Christ rejoiced in, seemed to me worthy of such joy; and that rejoicing seemed to show the excellency of Christ, and of what spirit he was.

Sometimes, only mentioning a single word, has caused my heart to burn within me; or only seeing the name of Christ, or the name of some attribute of God. And God

has appeared glorious to me, on account of the Trinity. It has made me have exalting thoughts of God, that he subsists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The sweetest joys and delights I have experienced, have not been those that have arisen from a hope of my own good estate; but in a direct view of the glorious things of the Gospel. When I enjoy this sweetness, it seems to carry me above the thoughts of my own estate: it seems at such times a loss that I cannot bear, to take off my eye from the glorious, pleasant object I behold without me, to turn my eye in upon myself.

My heart has been much on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. The histories of the past advancement of Christ's kingdom have been sweet to me. When I have read histories of past ages, the pleasantest thing in all my reading has been to read of the kingdom of Christ being promoted. And when I have expected, in my reading, to come to any such thing, I have rejoiced in the prospect all the way as I read. And my mind has been much entertained and delighted with the Scripture promises and prophecies which relate to the future glorious advancement of Christ's kingdom upon earth.

I have sometimes had a sense of the excellent fulness of Christ, and his meetness and suitableness as a Savior; whereby he has appeared to me, far above all, the chief of ten thousands. His blood and atonement have appeared precious, and his righteousness precious; which was always accompanied with ardency of spirit, and inward strugglings and breathings, and groanings that cannot be uttered, to be emptied of myself and swallowed up in Christ.

Once as I rode out into the woods for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and man, and his wonderful, great, full, pure, and precious grace and love, and meek and gentle

condescension. This grace, that appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception. This view continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour, and kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated, to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love him with a holy and pure love; to trust in him; to live upon him; to serve and follow him, and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity. I have, several other times, had views very much of the same nature, and which have had the same effects.

I have many times had a sense of the glory of the third person in the Trinity, in his office of sanctifier; in his holy operations, communicating divine light and life to the soul. God, in the communications of his Holy Spirit, has appeared as an infinite fountain of divine glory, being full and sufficient to fill and satisfy the soul; pouring forth itself in sweet communications; like the sun in its glory, sweetly and pleasantly diffusing light and life. And I have sometimes had an affecting sense of the excellency of the word of God, as a word of life; as the light of life, a sweet, excellent, life-giving word; accompanied with a thirsting after that word, that it might dwell richly in my heart.

Often since I lived in this town I have had very affecting views of my own sinfulness and vileness; very frequently to such a degree as to keep me in a kind of loud weeping, sometimes for a considerable time together; so that I have often been forced to shut myself up. I have had a vastly greater sense of my own sinfulness and the badness of my heart, than ever I had before my conversion. It has often appeared to me, that if God should mark iniquity against me, I should appear the worst of all mankind, and have the lowest place in hell. When others,

that have come to talk with me about the concerns of their soul, have expressed the sense they have had of their own wickedness, I thought their expressions seemed exceedingly faint and feeble to represent my sinfulness.

My sinfulness, as I am in myself, has long appeared to me perfectly ineffable, and swallowing up all thought and imagination; like an infinite deluge, or mountains over my head. I know not how to express better what my sins appear to me to be, than by heaping infinite upon infinite, and multiplying infinite by infinite. Very often, for these many years, these expressions are in my mind and in my mouth, "Infinite upon infinite; infinite upon infinite!" When I look into my heart, and take a view of my sinfulness, it looks like an abyss deeper than hell. And it appears to me, that were it not for free grace, exalted and raised up to the infinite height of all the fulness and glory of the great Jehovah, and the arm of his power and grace stretched forth in all the majesty of his power, and in all the glory of his sovereignty, I should appear sunk down in my sins below hell itself, far beyond the sight of every thing but the eye of that grace which can pierce even down to such a depth. And yet, when I have had turns of weeping and crying for my sins, I thought I knew at the time that my repentance was nothing to my sin.

I always think of myself, that I ought, and it is an expression that has long been natural for me to use in prayer, "to lie infinitely low before God." And it is affecting to think how ignorant I was, when a young christian, of the bottomless, infinite depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy, and deceit, left in my heart.

I have a much greater sense of my universal, exceeding dependance on God's grace and strength and mere good pleasure, of late, than I used formerly to have; and have experienced more of an abhorrence of my own righteousness. And yet I am greatly afflicted with a proud and self-righteous spirit, much more sensibly than I used to be formerly. I see that serpent rising and putting

forth its head continually, every where, all around me.

Though it seems to me that, in some respects, I was a far better christian, for two or three years after my first conversion, than I am now, and lived in a more constant delight and pleasure, yet, of late years, I have had a more full and constant sense of the sovereignty of God, and a delight in it, and have had more of a sense of the glory of Christ, as a Mediator revealed in the Gospel. On one Saturday night, in particular, I had such a discovery of the excellency of the Gospel above all other doctrines, that I could not but say to myself, "This is my chosen light, my chosen doctrine;" and of Christ, "This is my chosen Prophet." It appeared sweet, beyond all expression, to follow Christ, and to be taught, and enlightened, and instructed by him; to learn of him, and live to him. Another Saturday night, (January, 1739,) I had such a sense of the blessedness of walking in the way of duty; of doing that which is right and meet to be done, and agreeable to the holy mind of God, that it caused me to break forth into a kind of loud weeping for a long time, so that I was forced to shut myself up, and fasten the doors. I could not but, as it were, cry out, "How happy are they who do that which is right in the sight of God! They are blessed indeed, they are the happy ones!" I had, at the same time, a very affecting sense how meet and suitable it is that God should govern the world and order all things according to his own pleasure; and I rejoiced in it, that God reigns, and that his will is done.

Note.—President Edwards was born at Windsor, Con. October 5, 1703; graduated at Yale College, September, 1720; preached in New-York eight months in 1722-3; was appointed tutor at Yale College, September, 1724; ordained at Northampton, Mass. February 15, 1727; dismissed, June 22, 1750; stationed as a missionary to the Indians at Stockbridge, August, 1751, where he wrote his Treatise on the Will; elected President of New Jersey College, October, 1757; died, March, 1758, aged 54.—The above account of his religious exercises was found among his papers at his death, and is supposed to have been written at Northampton, when he was about forty years of age, for his own private advantage.

No. 145.

ON HEARING

THE WORD OF GOD.

BY REV. ROBERT HALL, A. M.

Preaching is an ordinance of God, not entirely confined to the Christian dispensation. From the Old Testament history it appears that Ezra, upon the return of the Jews from Babylon, assembled them in the streets of Jerusalem; and ascending a stage or pulpit, for the advantage of being better seen and heard, read the Law in the ears of the people, and gave the interpretation thereof. From that time synagogues were erected in all the cities throughout Judea, and regular officers appointed to read, first the Pentateuch, and, after the persecution by Antiochus, the Prophets, and explain them in ample paraphrases or comments. Such was the origin of preaching.

When the fulness of time was come for God, in his infinite mercy, to send forth his Son, his appearance was first announced by John's proclaiming, in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord;" which, after a short time, was succeeded by the personal ministry of Christ and his apostles, with whom the dispensation of the Gospel, properly speaking, commenced. After his resurrection, our Lord extended the commission of the apostles to all nations: "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.*" Upon the formation of Christian churches, an order of men was appointed for the express purpose of preaching the word and administering the sacraments, wherein the wisdom and kindness of the Great Head of the Church is

eminently conspicuous; for such are the necessary avocations of life, so little the leisure most Christians possess for the acquisition of knowledge, and such the deficiency of many in the elementary parts of education, that they will always, under the blessing of God, be chiefly indebted to this appointment for any extensive acquaintance with divine truth.

The privilege of reading the Scriptures in our native language, is of inestimable value: but were it much more universal than it is, it would not supersede the necessity of *hearing* the Word; for there are not only difficulties in the Bible which require to be elucidated, but the living voice of a preacher is admirably adapted to awaken the attention and to excite an interest, as well as to apply the general truths of revelation to the various cases of Christian experience, and the regulation of human conduct. When an important subject is presented to an audience, with an ample illustration of its several parts, its practical improvement enforced, and its relation to the conscience and the heart insisted upon with seriousness, copiousness, and fervor, it is adapted, in the nature of things, to produce a more deep and lasting impression than can usually be expected from reading. He who knows how forcible are *right words*, and how apt man is to be moved by man, has consulted the constitution of our frame, by appointing an order of men whose office it is to address their fellow-creatures on their eternal concerns. Strong feeling is naturally contagious; and if, as the wise man observes, "as iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend," the combined effects of countenance, gesture, and voice, accompanying a powerful appeal to the understanding and the heart, on subjects of everlasting moment, can scarcely fail of being great.

But, independent of the natural tendency of the Christian ministry to promote spiritual improvement, it derives

a peculiar efficacy from its being a divine appointment. It is not merely a natural, it is also an *instituted* means of good; and whatever God appoints by special authority, he graciously engages to bless; provided it be attended with right dispositions, and proceed from right motives. The means of grace are, as the word imports, the consecrated channels in which his spiritual mercies flow; and as the communication of spiritual blessings always implies an exertion of divine power, so these become the stated instrument, or occasion of its exercise. These are emphatically His ways, in which he is wont to walk with his people: "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways." Isa. 64: 5. Though the Spirit bloweth where it listeth, where the Gospel is not preached the effects of his operation are rarely to be discerned; and we witness few or no indications of a renewed character out of the bounds of Christendom.

So intimate, by divine appointment, is the connection between the salvation of man and the ministry of the word, that the method of salvation under the Gospel derives from the latter its distinguishing appellation, being denominated *the hearing of faith.* St. James, in like manner, asserts it to be the instrumental cause of our regeneration: "Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth." And to the same purpose St. Peter reminds the Christians whom he was addressing, that they were "born not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God; which word," he adds, "is by the Gospel preached unto you." The written word, we are told indeed from the highest authority, is "able to make us wise unto salvation;" and many pleasing instances of its saving efficacy might be produced to confirm this position; but as the Gospel was *preached* before it was *penned*, it is certain that most of the passages which speak on this subject, are to be referred to its public ministry, and that, in subsequent ages, God has

put a distinguishing honor upon it, by employing it as the principal means of accomplishing his saving purposes. There is every reason to suppose that the far greater part of those who have been truly sanctified and enlightened, will ascribe the change they have experienced principally to *the hearing of faith.*

What a powerful motive results from thence to take heed *how we hear!* If we feel any concern for a share in the great salvation, how careful should we be not to neglect the principal means of obtaining it. If there be a class from whom the spiritual beauty and glory of the Gospel remain concealed, it consists of a description of persons, the very mention of whom ought to make us tremble. "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." Let no man allow himself to neglect the hearing of the word, or hear it in a careless or irreverent manner, under the pretence of his having an opportunity of reading it in private; since its public ministry possesses, with respect to its tendency to excite the attention and interest the heart, many unquestionable advantages: besides, that such a pretence will generally be found hollow and disingenuous. If you find a person habitually inattentive under an awakening ministry, follow him into his retirement, and it may be confidently predicted you will seldom see the Bible in his hands; or, if he overcome his aversion to religion so far as occasionally to peruse a chapter, it will be in the same spirit in which he hears: he will satisfy himself with having completed the task, "and straightway go his way, and forget what manner of man he was." If the general course of the world were as favorable to religion as it is the contrary; if an intercourse with mankind were a school of piety, the state of such persons would be less hopeless, and there would be a greater probability of their being gained without the word; but while every thing around us conspires to render the mind earthly and sensual, and

the world is continually moulding and transforming its votaries, the situation of such as attend the means of grace in a *careless manner* is unspeakably dangerous; since they are continually exposing themselves to influences which corrupt, while they render themselves inaccessible to such as are of a salutary operation. What can be expected but the death of that patient, who takes a course which is continually inflaming his disease, while he despises and neglects the remedy? When we see men attentive under the ministry of the word, and evidently anxious to comprehend its truths, we cannot but entertain hopes of their salvation; "for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

It is observed of the Jews of Berea, that they were more noble than those of Thessalonica, because "they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so;" and the result was such as might be expected—a great multitude of them believed. Candid and attentive hearers place themselves, so to speak, in the way of the Spirit; while those who cannot be prevailed upon to give a serious attention, may most justly be said to put the kingdom of God far from them, and judge themselves unworthy of eternal life. To such, the awful threatenings recorded in the Proverbs are most applicable: "Because I have called, and ye refused: I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded: I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh." In such cases the ministers of the Gospel can do little more than, like Jeremiah, "retire to weep in secret places" for their pride.

Previously to your entering into the house of God, seek a *prepared heart, and implore the blessing of God* on the ministry of his word. It may be presumed that no real Christian will neglect to preface his attendance on social worship with secret prayer. But let the acquisition of a

fervent and serious frame of mind, freed from the cares, vanities, and pollutions of the world, accompanied with earnest desires after God, and the communications of his grace, form a principal subject of your private devotions. Forget not to implore a blessing on the public ministry, that it may accomplish, in yourselves and in others, the great purposes it is designed to answer; and that those measures of assistance may be afforded to your ministers, which shall replenish them with light, love, and liberty, that they may speak the mystery of the Gospel as it ought to be spoken. As the duties of the closet have the happiest tendency, by solemnizing and elevating the mind, to prepare for those of the sanctuary; so the conviction of having borne your minister on your heart before the throne of grace, would, apart from every other consideration, dispose him to address you with augmented zeal and tenderness. We should consider it as such a token for good, as well as such an unequivocal proof of your attachment, as would greatly animate and support us under all our discouragements.

Establish in your minds the highest *reverence and esteem* of the glorious Gospel. Recollect the miracles wrought to confirm it; the sanction, the awful sanction by which a due reception of it is enforced; and the infinite value of the blood by which its blessings were ratified and procured. Recollect, that on its acceptance or rejection, on the effects which it produces on the heart and life, depends our state for eternity; since there are no other means devised for our recovery, no other name given under heaven by which we can be saved, besides that which it exhibits. It is not merely the incorruptible seed of regeneration; it is also the mould in which our souls must be cast, agreeably to the apostle's beautiful metaphor, "Ye have obeyed from the heart that form," or mould, "of doctrine into which ye were delivered." In order to our bearing the image of

Christ, who is the first-born among many brethren, it is necessary to receive its impress in every part; nor is there any thing in us what it ought to be, any thing truly excellent, but in proportion to its conformity to that pattern. Its operation is not to be confined to time or place; it is the very *element* in which the Christian is appointed to live, and to receive continual accessions of spiritual strength and purity, until he is presented faultless in the presence of the Divine Glory. The more you esteem the Gospel, the more will you be attached to that ministry in which its doctrines are developed, and its duties explained and inculcated; because, in the present state of the world, it is the chief, though not the only means of possessing yourselves of its advantages. To tremble at God's word, is also mentioned as one of the most essential features in the character of him to whom God will look with approbation.

Hear the word *with attention.* If you are convinced of the justice of the preceding remarks, nothing further is requisite to convince you of the propriety of this advice, since they all combine to enforce it. We would only remark, in general, that the knowledge derived from a discourse depends entirely upon attention; in exact proportion to which will be the progress made by a mind of a given capacity. Not to listen with attention, is the same thing as to have ears which hear not, and eyes which see not. While you are hearing, whatever train of thoughts of a foreign and extraneous nature obtrude themselves, should be resolutely repelled. In the power of fixing the attention, the most precious of the intellectual habits, mankind differ greatly; but every man possesses some, and it will increase the more it is exerted. He who exercises no discipline over himself in this respect, acquires such a volatility of mind, such a vagrancy of imagination, as dooms him to be the sport of every mental vanity; it is impossible such a man should attain to true wisdom. If we cultivate, on the con-

trary, a habit of attention, it will become natural: thought will strike its roots deep, and we shall by degrees experience no difficulty in following the track of the largest connected discourse. As we find it easy to attend to what interests the heart, and the thoughts naturally follow the course of the affections, the best antidote to habitual inattention to religious instruction, is the love of the truth. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly," and to hear it attentively will be a pleasure, not a task.

The practice of *sleeping* in places of worship—a practice, we believe, not prevalent in any other places of public resort—is not only a gross violation of the advice we are giving, but most distressing to ministers, and most disgraceful to those who indulge in it. If the apostle indignantly inquires of the Corinthians whether they had houses to eat and to drink in, may we not with equal propriety ask those who indulge in the practice, whether they have not beds to sleep in, that they convert the house of God into a dormitory? A little self-denial, a very gentle restraint on the appetite, would, in most cases, put a stop to this abomination; and with what propriety can he pretend to desire the sincere milk of the word, who cannot be prevailed upon, one day out of seven, to refrain from the intemperance which absolutely disqualifies him from receiving it?

Hear the word of God *with impartiality*. To be partial in the law was a crime formerly charged upon the Jewish priests; nor is it less sinful in the professors of Christianity. There is a class of hearers who have their favorite topics, to which they are so immoderately attached, that they are offended if they are not brought forward on all occasions; while there are others, of at least equal importance, which they can seldom be prevailed upon to listen to with patience. Some are never pleased but with doctrinal statements: they are in raptures while the preacher is insisting on the doctrines of grace, and the privileges

of God's people; but when he proceeds to inculcate the practical improvement of these doctrines, and the necessity of adorning the profession of them by the virtues of a holy life, their countenances fall, and they make no secret of their disgust. Others are all for practical preaching, while they have no relish for that truth which can alone sanctify the heart. But, as it is a symptom of a diseased state of the body to be able to relish only one sort of food, so it is not less of the mind to have a taste for only one sort of instruction. It is difficult to suppose that such persons love the word of God as the word of God; for if they did, every part of it, in its due proportion and its proper place, would be acceptable. It is possible, in consequence of the various exigencies of the Christian life, that there may be seasons to which some views of divine truth may be peculiarly suited, and on that account heard with superior advantage and delight; but this is perfectly consistent with an impartial attachment to the whole revelation. But to feel an habitual distaste to instruction the most solemn and Scriptural, unless it be confined to a few favorite topics, is an infallible indication of a wrong state of mind. It is only by yielding the soul to the impression of every divine communication and discovery, that the several graces which enter into the composition of the new creature are nourished and sustained. As the perfection of the Christian system results from the symmetry of its several parts, in which there is nothing redundant, nothing disproportioned, and nothing defective; so the beauty of the Christian character consists in its exhibiting an adequate impress and representation of the whole. If there be any particular branch of the word of God to which we are habitually indisposed, we may generally conclude that it is precisely the part which we most need; and instead of indulging our distaste, we ought seriously to set ourselves to correct the mental disease which has given occasion to it.

In some instances the partiality to certain views of truth, to the exclusion of others of which we are complaining, may arise not so much from moral disorder as from a deficiency of religious knowledge, and that contraction of mind which is its usual consequence. We would earnestly exhort persons of this description not to make themselves the standard, or attempt to confine their ministers to the first principles of the oracles of God.. There are in most assemblies some who are capable of digesting strong meat, whose improvement ought to be consulted; and it behooves such as are not, instead of abridging the provisions of the family, to endeavor to enlarge their knowledge and extend their inquiries. A Christian minister is compared by our Lord to a great householder, who brings out of his treasure things new and old.

Hear the word with constant self-application. Hear not for *others*, but for *yourselves*. What should we think of a person who, after accepting an invitation to a feast, and taking his place at the table, instead of partaking of the repast, amused himself with speculating on the nature of the provisions, or the manner in which they are prepared, and their adaptation to the temperament of the several guests, without tasting a single article? Such, however, is the conduct of those who hear the word, without applying it to themselves, or considering the aspect it bears on their individual character. Go to the house of God with a serious expectation and desire of meeting with something suited to your particular state, something that shall lay the axe to the root of your corruptions, mortify your easily besetting sins, and confirm the graces in which you are most deficient. A little attention will be sufficient to give you that insight into your character, which will teach you what you need, what are the peculiar temptations to which you are exposed, and on what account you feel most shame and humiliation before God. Every one may know, if he pleases, the plague of his own heart. Keep your eye upon it while you are hear-

ing, and eagerly lay hold of whatever is best adapted to heal and correct it.

Remember that religion is a *personal* thing, an *individual* concern; for every one of us must give an account of himself to God, and every man bear his own burden. "Is not my word as a fire," saith the Lord; "and as a hammer, that breaketh the rock in pieces?" If such be its power and efficacy, lay your hearts open to it, and expose them fully to the stroke of the hammer, and the action of the fire. Do not imagine, because you are tolerably well acquainted with the system of the Gospel, you have therefore nothing to learn; and that your only obligation to attend to its ministry, arises from the necessity of setting an example. It is probable, your knowledge is much more limited than you suppose: but if it be not, it is a great mistake to imagine the only advantage derived from hearing is the acquisition of new truths. There is a spiritual perception more important than the knowledge which is merely speculative. The latter is at most but a means to the former, and the perception is not confined to new propositions: it is frequently, nay, more frequently attached to truths already known; and when they are faithfully and affectionately exhibited, they are the principal means of calling into action and strengthening the habits of internal grace. Love, joy, humility, heavenly-mindedness, godly sorrow for sin, and holy resolutions against it, are not promoted so much by novel speculation, as by placing in a just and affecting light the acknowledged truths of the Gospel, and thereby stirring up the mind by way of remembrance. "While I am in this tabernacle," said St. Peter, "I will not be negligent to put you in remembrance of these things, though you know them, and are established in the present truth." We appeal to the experience of every real Christian, whether the sweetest and most profitable seasons he has enjoyed, have not been those in which he is conscious of having learned no new

truth, strictly speaking, but was indulged with spiritual and transforming views of the plain, unquestionable discoveries of the Gospel. As the word of God is the food of souls, so it corresponds to that character in this respect among others—that the strength and refreshment it imparts depends not upon its novelty, but upon the nutritious properties it possesses. It is a sickly appetite only which craves incessant variety.

Hear *with candor.* The indulgence of a nice and fastidious taste is as adverse to the improvement of the hearer, as it is to the comfort of the minister. Considering the variety of our avocations, the necessity we are under of addressing you in all states of mind, and sometimes on the most unexpected occasions, if we could not rely on your candor, our situation would be scarcely tolerable. When the general tendency of a discourse is good, and the instruction delivered weighty and solid, it is the part of candor to overlook imperfections in the composition, manner, or elocution of the speaker; imitating, in this respect, the example of the Galatians, of whom Paul testified that they did not despise his temptation which was in the flesh—some peculiarity in his speech or countenance, we may suppose, which exposed him to the derision of the unfeeling.

The Lord, by the mouth of Isaiah, severely censures such as make a man *an offender for a word:* a fault too prevalent in many of our churches, especially among such as are the least informed and judicious; for the disposition to sit in judgment upon the orthodoxy of ministers, is exactly in an inverse proportion to the ability. Be not hasty in concluding that a preacher is erroneous, because he may chance to use a word or phrase not exactly suited to your taste and comprehension; it is very possible the idea it is intended to convey may perfectly accord with your own sentiments; but if it should not, it is equally possible the propriety of it may be vindicated by considerations with

which you are not acquainted. "Be not many masters, many teachers," saith St. James, "knowing ye shall receive the greater condemnation." Hear the word of God less in the spirit of judges than those who shall be judged by it. If you are not conscious of your need of religious instruction, why attend the places appointed for that purpose? But if you are, how inconsistent is it to indulge that spirit of cavil and censure, which can have no other effect than to deter your ministers from the faithful discharge of their office, from declaring the whole counsel of God? In most congregations there is one or more persons who value themselves on their skill in detecting the unsoundness of ministers; and who, when they hear a stranger, attend less with a view to spiritual improvement, than to pass their verdict, which they expect shall be received as decisive. It is almost unnecessary to add, that they usually consist of the most ignorant, conceited, and irreligious part of society. Such a disposition should, as much as possible, be discouraged and suppressed.

"Receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls." Despise not men of plain talents, who preach the truth, and appear to have your eternal welfare at heart. If you choose to converse with your fellow-Christians on what you have been hearing—a practice which, if rightly conducted, may be very edifying—let your conversation turn more upon *the tendency, the spiritual beauty and glory of those great things of God, which have engaged your attention*, than on the merit of the preacher. We may readily suppose that Cornelius and his friends, after hearing St. Peter, employed very few words in discussing the oratorical talents of a great apostle, any more than the three thousand who, on the day of Pentecost, were pricked to the heart: their minds were too much occupied by the momentous truths to which they had been listening, to have room for such reflections; yet this is the only kind of religious

conversation—if it deserves the appellation—in which too many professors engage. "Give me," says the incomparable Fenelon, "the preacher who imbues my mind with such a love of the *word of God*, as makes me desirous of hearing it from *any* mouth."

When your ministers are exposing a particular vice, and endeavoring to deter from it by the motives which reason and revelation supply, guard against a suspicion of their being *personal*. That they ought not to be so, we readily admit; that is, that they ought not to descend to such a minute specification of circumstances as shall necessarily direct the attention to one or more individuals; but if they are not at liberty to point their arrows against the particular vices among them; or are expected, lest they wound, to make a courteous apology, by assuring the audience of their hope and conviction that none among them are implicated, they had better seal up their lips in perpetual silence. It is a most indispensable part of our office to warn sinners of every description; and, that we may not beat the air, to attack particular sins, as well as sin in the abstract; and if, without our intending it, an individual suspects he is personally aimed at, he merely bears an involuntary testimony to our fidelity and skill.

Hear the word of God *with a sincere resolution of obeying it*. "If ye know these things," said our Lord, "happy are ye if ye do them." "He that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a man who built his house upon a rock." To be a forgetful hearer of the word, and not a doer, is to forget all the advantages of the Christian dispensation, which is imparted solely with a view to practice. The doctrine of faith is published with a design to produce the obedience of faith in all nations. The doctrine of repentance is nothing more or less than the command of God, that all men, everywhere, should repent. If we are reminded that "he who, in times past, spake to

the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son," it is that we may be admonished not to refuse him that speaketh. If we are taught the supreme dignity and exaltation of Christ, as a Mediator, it is that "every knee may bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord." If the apostles, having the mind of Christ, faithfully imparted it, it was that the same mind might be in us, to purify our passions and regulate our conduct. We can scarcely imagine a greater inconsistency, than to hear the word with apparent seriousness, without intending to comply with its directions. It is a solemn mockery, concealing, under an air of reverence and submission, a determination to rebel. To suppose the Supreme Being pleased with such a mode of attendance, is to impute to him a conduct which it would be an insult to ascribe to a fellow-creature; for who but the weakest of mortals, under the character of a master, or a sovereign, would be gratified with the profound and respectful attention with which his commands were heard, while there existed a fixed resolution not to obey? Remember, I entreat you, the practical tendency of every Christian doctrine. Remember, that the ministry of the Gospel is the appointed instrument of forming the spirits of men to faith and obedience; and that, consequently, the utmost attention and assiduity in hearing it are fruitless and unavailing, if they fail to produce that effect.

Finally: Be careful, after you have heard the word, *to retain and perpetuate its impressions.* Meditate, retire, digest it in your thoughts, turn it into prayer; in a word, spare no pains to fasten it upon your hearts. You have read of those to whom the Gospel was preached as well as to us; "but the word did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Endeavor to exert upon it distinct and vigorous acts of faith, and thereby to mingle and incorporate it with all the powers of the mind, and all the springs of action; but this you can never accomplish

without deep and serious reflection, for want of which, it is too often left loose, and exposed, like uncovered seed, which the fowls of heaven easily pick up and devour. "Then cometh that wicked one," says our Lord, "and taketh it out of his heart, and he becometh unfruitful." How many hearers, by engaging in worldly conversation, or giving way to a vain and unprofitable train of thought, when they leave the sanctuary, lose the impressions they had received, instead of conducting themselves like persons who have just been put in possession of a treasure they are anxious to secure from depredation! If Satan watches for an opportunity of taking the word out of our hearts, what remains but that we oppose vigilance to vigilance, and effort to effort; and since the prize contended for, by the powers of darkness, is *our souls*, what a melancholy reflection will it be, if the disinterested malice of our enemies renders them vigilant and active in seeking our destruction, while we are careless and negligent in seeking our own salvation! Satan, conscious that the word of God is capable of elevating us to that pinnacle of happiness from whence he fell, contemplates its success with alarm, and spares no artifice, nor stratagem, which his capacious intellect can suggest, to obstruct its progress; and if we, by our criminal negligence, give him the possession of our hearts, we shall be guilty of that prodigy of folly and infatuation, which is equally condemned by the counsels of heaven and the machinations of hell.

No. 146.

HELPS

TO

SELF-EXAMINATION.

QUESTION 1. *Have you a practical judgment of your being a guilty, weak, blind creature?*

You may know how far you have a practical judgment of your being a *guilty* creature, by your being without confidence to approach God but through a Redeemer. By your patience in waiting for all mercies, spiritual and temporal. By your thankfulness for all things. By your resignation when under the hand of God or man. By your freedom to own your faults when needful. By your meekness in bearing reproof. By your aptness to esteem others better than yourself.

You may know how far you have a practical judgment of your *weakness*, by your referring all good thoughts, desires, purposes, and deeds, to God's grace. By your distrust of your own strength on all occasions. By your frequency in looking up for strength to enable you to perform all duties, and resist all temptations. By your importunity in asking the grace of God. By your diligence in the use of all the means of obtaining this grace.

You may know how far you have a practical judgment of your *blindness*, by your looking to the word of God for all direction. By your seeking the light of the Spirit to make you understand the Scriptures, and not referring yourself to your own reasonings upon them. By your dependence on the light of the Spirit in prayer. By your distrust of your own judgment. By your patience in hearing the judgment of others. By your not being apt to dispute. By your readiness to seek advice.

Question 2. *Have you a practical knowledge of Christ Jesus as of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification?*

You may discover how far you practically know Christ as of God made unto us *wisdom*, by your referring yourself, not to the reason of men, but to the word of God, for direction in all matters of religion. By your having your foundation for what you believe and practice, built on God's word, not man's authority. By your being fully satisfied with what God declares in any case, so as to find no doubt remaining. By your steadiness, and not being disconcerted, because of the differing judgments of others concerning what you have seen with your own eyes in the Scriptures. By your meekness towards those who differ from you. By your diligence in reading and hearing God's word.

You may discover how far you practically know Christ as your *righteousness*, by your fleeing to him for refuge from the accusations of conscience, the sense of guilt, and the fear of death. By the relief you find in your soul from such applications in all these cases. By the frequency and speediness of your applications to Christ. By your humble boldness in them. By your being able to look on God as a father in Christ. By the hope you have of glory through the merits of Christ.

You may discover how far you practically know Christ as your strength for *sanctification*, by the frequency of your application to him for grace. By your confidence that his grace is sufficient to keep you, in every case, against every enemy, and to sanctify you wholly. By your not declining any duty to which you are called, through fear of failing in it. By your being sensible that whatever you are, and do, according to God's will, is by his grace. By your persisting vigorously in opposing sin, especially that which most easily besets you, and in seeking advancement in holiness, under whatever discouragements. By your not despairing of success, though sin be apt sometimes to gain advantage over you.

QUESTION 3. *Do you practically choose God as your master to serve, and your portion to enjoy?*

You may judge how far you choose God for your *master,* by the care you take to please him. By the cheerfulness with which you do it. By your cleaving steadfastly to his will in all trying cases. By the self-displeasure you feel whenever you have done any thing to offend him. By the diligence you use in searching the Scriptures to know what his will is. By the constancy and importunity of your prayers for grace to enable you to serve him better. By your watchfulness against temptations. By the determination of your heart against the sin that does most easily beset you. By your sorrow to see him dishonored as he is in the world.

You may determine how far you choose God for your *portion,* by the care you take to walk in the sense of his presence. By your abstaining from such indifferent things as you have found by experience cause you to lose the sense of his presence. By your endeavors to keep the sense of his presence with you in the duties of your calling. By the support which the consciousness of his being near gives your soul. By the desire you have of meeting him in all divine ordinances. By the desire you have of being satisfied, on Scripture grounds, that you are in his favor. By the delight you take in those who love him. By the preference which, when brought to the trial, you in fact give to God's favor beyond every earthly thing. By the encouragement you receive from the hope of seeing him face to face, and being for ever with him. By the effect which this hope has upon you in purifying your soul; leading you to be persevering in the daily performance of secret prayer in your closets, and to revive prayer in your families; carefully avoiding what you know to be sin, and doing whatever you know to be your duty.

QUESTION 4. *Do you desire and delight in the spiritual and temporal welfare of all mankind?*

You may know how far you desire the *spiritual* welfare

of all others, by the concern you feel that your conduct may encourage them in all good ways. By the concern you feel that there may be nothing in your conduct that may be an offence to any. By your cheerfulness in foregoing any thing which you judge may be an offence. By your forbearance with all, for their good. By your readiness to improve all opportunities of benefiting your neighbor's soul. By your valuing your gifts and influence chiefly because they may render you helpful to the souls of others. By the frequency and importunity of your prayers for the grace of God upon them. By the satisfaction you take in those who are good. By your readiness to hope the best. By your finding yourself grieved at the faults and backslidings of others. By your compassion over sinners. By the indignation you find against yourself, for any risings of disgust against any for being better than yourself. By your joy in the success of the Gospel, whoever be the instrument.

You may know how far you desire the *temporal* welfare of others, by your aptness to make their case your own, thinking and acting for them as need is. By your readiness to give of your abundance. By your frugality, that you may have wherewith to help others. By your willingness to give or lend without being asked, where you see it is wanted. By your not secretly envying them their advancement. By your hearing of it without disgust. By your speaking of it without lessening it. By your rejoicing in their prosperity, as far as it is not made prejudicial to their souls.

Question 5. *Is it your real desire and daily endeavor to grow in grace?*

You may know this, by your not looking back on any past good works to stop or rest in them. By your jealousy over every thing that looks like decay. By your actual desire of grace in the use of all religious ordinances. By your diligence in the use of all such means. By the desire you find in you of the most searching and quickening preaching and conversation. By the sorrow it gives you, that you have not better improved your opportunities and time.

Question 6. *Is the law of sin in your members not only in a state of subjection, but losing its power and influence day by day?*

You may know whether corrupt nature be in *subjection*, by the purpose of your heart to do God's will in opposition to fear and shame, interest and ease, which the will of the flesh would have consulted and considered. By your acting in your general course upon the plan of obedience to God, while your corrupt nature is soliciting for a quite contrary course. By your hatred of indwelling sin, and regarding it as the heaviest of all your burdens. By your jealousy over, and watchfulness against your own deceitful heart, lest it should get advantage of you. By your godly shame, sorrow, and self-displeasure, when corrupt nature has gained advantage in any instance, stirring you up to oppose and deny it with immediate purpose of heart and greater diligence. By your not declining self-denying duties, though your flesh pleads for being spared.

You may know if corrupt nature be *losing ground*, by the greater steadfastness of your purposes for God and duty. By the greater readiness and ease wherewith you put them into practice. By the greater calmness and resolvedness of mind wherewith you reject the solicitations of the flesh. By the less influence your corruptions have over you, and the less power they have to make you apprehensive for them. By the greater command you have of yourself, to think and act with freedom and without bias.

Question 7. *Do you maintain that holy fear of offending God, which keeps you duly on your guard against falling into sin?*

You may know how far you do this, by your care to keep yourself out of all needless temptations. By the restraint of your mind in certain company, where your integrity may be in danger. By the diligence you use to preserve the spirituality of your temper against that vanity of mind which is natural to you. By your carefulness not to fall into lightness in conversation. By the abiding jeal-

ousy you have over the whole body of sin, and especially that member of it which has most power with you. By the abiding reverence you have upon your mind of God's majesty and continual presence.

Question 8. *Have you such a tender concern for God's glory, as engages your attention to it beyond all other considerations?*

You may know how far this is your case, by the desire you have that the temper and disposition of your heart may be in more practical conformity to God's majesty and perfections, in faith, fear, love, trust, and submission. By your endeavor that your whole conduct may be not only inoffensive, but also calculated to promote faith in God, and submission to him, in all who are witnesses of your conversation. By your setting a value on your learning, knowledge, wealth, and influence, principally because God may be glorified by them. By your sorrow for any part of your conduct which has brought disgrace on God's name, and by your readiness to remove that disgrace by any means, however disagreeable to your pride, or seemingly prejudicial to your character. By your special regard to God's glory in your particular calling, serving him therein with that willingness, simplicity, diligence, and honesty, which shall testify your resignation to his will appointing you thereto, and most effectually promote his honor by you.

Question 9. *Do you, in all your dealings, do that unto all men which you would they should do unto you?*

You may judge of yourself herein, by your abhorrence and rejection, in your practice, of that worldly and most dishonest maxim, "Buy as cheap and sell as dear as you can." By your being as ready to pay as to receive. By your being as faithful in doing your work, as you are willing to be paid your wages. By your making conscience of using your time and ability to the benefit of those who have paid you for them. By your not lessening the worth of that you would buy, nor overrating the worth of that you would sell. By your taking no advantage of the necessities or

ignorance of any you deal with. By your not borrowing what you have no fair prospect of repaying. By your honest endeavor to pay what you owe. By your restoring what you have fraudulently taken, or what is not your own. By your making conscience of not defrauding the government of tribute and customs. By your being more than an eye-servant, who works only when he is looked upon.

Question 10. *Are you waiting and longing for the joy that shall be revealed in you, when your soul, being perfected in holiness, and your body made spiritual, you shall see and enjoy God for ever in the face of Jesus Christ?*

You may discover how far this hope is in you, by the indifference it has begotten in you to the pleasures, riches, and honors of the world. By your readiness to part with them when they interfere with these your future expectations. By your quietness and patience in present troubles or reproaches. By the light account you make of such troubles and reproaches. By the frequency of your thinking of this approaching glory. By the delight which the thought of it gives you. By the desire you have to depart and be with Christ.

Question 11. *Do you maintain a thankful temper of heart for God's mercies towards you, spiritual and temporal?*

Are you thankful that you are not in despair of mercy? That you have hope thereof? That you enjoy peace of mind, notwithstanding your manifold sins, while you strive perfectly to obey God? That you have confidence towards God as your God? Are you thankful for good motions, for good purposes; for grace enabling you to perform duty, though done with much imperfection? For grace following you, when you have fallen? Are you thankful for your knowledge of the Gospel? For any abiding place it has in your mind? For any of its promises, threatenings, or directions brought home to you in time of need? For your steadfastness in believing the Gospel, so as that you are not unsettled and disordered by the different opinions of others, or by the falling away of any who have long made open

profession? You may know how far you are thankful for spiritual mercies in general, by your looking on them as marks of God's good-will towards you. By their preserving you in a quiet, cheerful temper of heart, in whatever circumstances. By your readiness to own them to the glory of God. By the influence they have to promote in you a grateful and childlike obedience.

As to temporal mercies, you cannot be duly thankful for them, unless you are sensible you have forfeited all right to them by sin. And you may know how far you are so, by the frequency and fervency of your thanksgivings for life, and all the blessings you enjoy, which make life comfortable to yourself, or render you useful to others. By the frequency and fervency of your thanksgivings for those providences which keep or deliver you from danger, which prevent you from falling into sin, which bring you in the way of the means of grace, which are suited to quicken and forward you in faith and holiness.

In one word, do you feel that you have destroyed yourself by sin; and that in Christ alone is your help? Do you hate all sin, and receive Christ as the Lord your righteousness; and trust in him alone for salvation? Do you love him more than father or mother, houses or lands, or any earthly object? Is it your delight to obey all his commandments? Do you receive temporal mercies as his gifts, and make it your object to honor him in them; feel that you are not your own, but are bought with a price; and strive to glorify him in body and spirit, which are his? If so, you may hope that "your life is hid with Christ in God;" that when Christ, "who is your life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory."

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THE

GOSPEL MINISTRY

ENTITLED TO SUPPORT.*

BY REV. JAMES BENNETT, D. D.

PRESIDENT OF ROTHERHAM COLLEGE, ENGLAND.

"If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?"—1 Cor. 9: 11.

It devolves on me, my dear hearers, by the appointment of others, and not by my own choice, to unfold and enforce the duty of supporting the ministry of the word. I am not unaware that the first mention of this subject will startle many, and awaken a thousand reflections on the delicacy, not to say the invidiousness, of the attempt. But as I hope to give the most satisfactory proof that divine authority binds this duty on the conscience, I presume that you feel it would be an affront to your good sense, and a reflection on your Christian principles, to waste your time in efforts to display the propriety of inculcating that which God has commanded, and of resolving, that neglect on this point shall not rob us of the right to say, "We have kept back nothing that was profitable to you, nor shunned to declare the whole counsel of God."

If any shrink from this subject, not on their own account, but for the sake of others—lest the discussion should prove

* The first American edition of this discourse was published in the New York Methodist Magazine for Jan. and Feb. 1822.

injurious to religion, by giving color to the suspicion of mercenary motives, which some affect to entertain against the ministers of religion—I respect their fears, I sympathize with their delicate solicitudes, and say, with the apostle, it were better for us to starve, or to die, than that any man should make void our glorying that we preach the Gospel, "not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; and seek not yours, but you."

I would, however, remind such hearers, that the words I have chosen for my text are extracted from a passage in which the same apostle, who was so exquisitely alive to every thing that might commit the honor of the Gospel, inculcated the duty of supporting the ministry on an infant church, whom he might naturally be afraid of prejudicing against that religion which they had so recently embraced. Yet we shall soon see with what frankness and decision he, who would sacrifice every right or interest of his own, or even life itself, to the honor of the Gospel, demands the recompense due to pastoral toils; without once betraying the slightest suspicion that he might injure the religion of Jesus, by pressing a duty which bears the impress of divine authority, and commends itself alike to the coolest decision of the judgment and the noblest feelings of the heart.

That those who live under the highest inspirations of religion, will welcome the consideration of this subject, I am satisfied; because I know that they grieve for the inadequate attention paid to that which so deeply affects the interests of the church; while those who would gladly lose sight of the grand Christian duty, or blot it from the code of Scripture and the Christian's breast, are the very persons for whose "correction and instruction in righteousness" we are compelled to unfold the duty, and urge to that obedience which heaven demands for its honor and their highest good.

On the coolest consideration, therefore, I feel myself entitled to all Christian freedom in discussing this subject; not forgetting that, as I am often called to address young ministers on their duty to the churches, and can appeal to some present that I have endeavored to discharge that delicate task with unsparing fidelity, showing all that the churches have a right to expect from us, I may be indulged with equal boldness, while I call upon Christians to yield an adequate support to those who "watch for your souls as they that must give an account."

I request, then, your candid attention to,

I. *The divine appointment*, that the church of Christ should support its ministers.

To a Christian audience, scarcely any thing more is necessary, certainly nothing is more conclusive and authoritative on any point, than to show that "thus saith the Lord." In the mode of adducing my proof of this, I cannot follow a better example than that of the inspired apostle, who shows that the ancient dispensation enjoined the same duty; that Christ perpetuated it under the Gospel; and that, in fact, it may be termed a duty of natural religion, or, in other words, that it is but common justice.

1. *Under the Mosaic dispensation*, God enjoined that the ministers of religion should be supported by the contributions of the people.

Let no one take alarm at this appeal to the Law, as if I wished to bring them under the Jewish yoke of ceremonies; for it should be remembered, that all that is most dear to our hearts as Christians, was first announced to the world by Moses and the prophets, before Christ and his apostles proclaimed the fulfilment of the promised grace. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," said Moses in the Law; "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," sang the sublime prophet Isaiah; while those

Psalms which kindle our devotion, and give utterance to the emotions they inspire, were penned by David for the service of the Mosaic tabernacle and the temple which Solomon built. If ever, therefore, we read the Old Testament with reverence and delight; if, at any time, it cheers our hearts with its consolations, or guides our steps by its counsels; we admit that the more ancient half of the inspired code may be our instructor, though it was given under a dispensation that has now yielded to one more glorious and complete. In fact, the very apostle who most strenuously contended that the law was but a "shadow of good things to come, of which the body is Christ," in that same epistle, which was designed and blessed to call off the earliest Christians from doting upon that which was abolished, so fully displays the various and interesting modes in which the legal rites unfolded evangelical truths, that he leaves no doubt of the propriety of learning Christian duty from the general principles of a dispensation, whose peculiar rites are no longer of force.

Justly, therefore, the apostle says to the Corinthian church, "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, it was written; that he that plougheth, should plough in hope; and he that thresheth in hope, should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all

things, lest we should hinder the Gospel of Christ. Do ye not know, that they who minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they who wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." 1 Cor. 9: 7–14.

This leads me to show,

2. The same duty, of supporting the ministers of religion, is enjoined by Christ *under the Gospel.*

Here, also, as in all other things, that Saviour, who is the Legislator, has made himself the model of virtue. He who wrought, as it is probable, at the trade of a carpenter, to support himself and the family in which he was born, previously to his coming forth to the public ministry, would not have disdained to continue that course of honest industry, however it might have shocked the pride of the carnal mind; yet he deemed it proper to discontinue it, from the time that he was anointed by the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel of the kingdom. As he came not "to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many," we might have expected that he would rather give than receive; and to him who wrought miracles to meet the exigencies of the starving thousands who attended his ministry, it had been easy to create all that was necessary for him and his attendant band. He chose, however, to cast himself on the liberality of his hearers, to live upon the contributions of those whom he was serving; for, in addition to the entertainment he received, wherever he went, preaching the Gospel, "certain women, who followed, ministered to him of their substance."

In harmony with the same design, and as a part of the same plan, when he sent forth the Apostles for a short excursion, while he was with them, that these newly-fledged eaglets might try their wings before he should be taken from them, and they should fly through the whole world, having

the everlasting Gospel to preach to every nation under heaven, he gave them this charge: "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; *for the workman is worthy of his meat.* And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till you go thence. And when ye come into a house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily, I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for that city." He could have wrought miracles for them every day, and supplied all their need each moment. Or he, who raised money from the bottom of the sea, in the mouth of a fish, to pay the contribution required for the service of the temple, could, in a moment, have filled their purses with all that their journey would require. Nor is it improbable that it would have been far more gratifying to the feelings, I would not say the pride, of the disciples, to pay for all they obtained, and openly confer, rather than seem to receive obligation. But the superior wisdom of their Lord and ours determined that they should go without scrip, and without purse; that those to whom they ministered should entertain and support them all their journey through; that they should inquire for the most worthy persons, and there abide, as putting honor upon their host; for it is a maxim in Christ's kingdom, that he and his faithful servants richly repay their entertainment, since the laborer is well worthy of his meat.

When, therefore, the Spirit descended on them at Pentecost, the apostles gave themselves up wholly to their ministry; so entirely withdrawing from all secular concerns, that even the distribution of the alms of the faithful was not sufficiently spiritual for their hands. They said, therefore, "It is not meet for us to leave the word of God to serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and the ministry of the word." Acts 6 : 2–4.

In those letters to the ministers, Timothy and Titus, in which Paul portrays the character and describes the duties of the Christian pastor, he says, "*Give thyself wholly to these things,* that thy profiting may appear to all." "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." 2 Tim. 2 : 4.

I know, indeed, that it is objected, that Paul himself is an exception to this rule. But *for what reason* did Paul make himself an exception to that which he declared the Lord ordained should be the general practice? Because there were some, among the first churches, who, being ill affected to his person, his ministry, and doctrine, would gladly have seized any opportunity to charge him with sinister motives. He determined, therefore, to cut off all occasion, "from them who desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we." 2 Cor. 11 : 12. Who, therefore, can require their minister to imitate the Apostle, in thus declining to receive support from those to whom he ministered, without making the unenviable admission, that they imitate the ill-disposed persons who view the ministry and the Gospel with an evil eye; whom it is therefore necessary to melt down by heaping coals of fire on

their heads; to vanquish, by such a course of voluntary martyrdom for their welfare as would stop the mouth of an infidel, and compel the bitterest foe to admit we were their disinterested friend?

For this reason, our missionaries among the heathen are obliged, at first, to support themselves, or must be assisted by the churches at home; because we cannot expect *idolaters* to contribute to the support of a religion whose truth and value they have yet to learn. But shall we deal thus with the churches of Christ? The love of Christ forbids that we should treat you, brethren, as *heathens.*

But after all, it was only at certain intervals, and in particular places, that Paul labored, working with his own hands to minister to his wants. For we read most distinctly, of the contributions made to his support, by the disciples of Christ. One beautiful acknowledgment of their liberality may well suffice. "In Thessalonica, ye Philippians sent once and again unto my necessity. Not that I desire a gift; but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God; but my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ."

Even in Corinth, where the Apostle received nothing from the church he served, he was assisted by churches at a distance. "Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the Gospel of God freely? I robbed other churches, taking wages of them to do you service. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man; for that which was lacking to me the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied." If the persons to whom this was written had any generous sensibility, how must they

have been stung by this reflection on themselves, and how must they have envied the churches of Macedonia their superior honor in supporting the apostles of Christ!

3. It is the dictate of what may be termed *natural religion*, as it is but common justice, that those who labor for others should be supported by them. Had not God explicitly interposed his authority, nor regulated this subject in divine revelation; but had he only said, now judge of your ownselves; does not nature teach you what is right? Would it not have been manifest, to every man of common sense and just feeling, that if one class of society give themselves to secular duties, and to provide what is useful for this life, and another devote their days to mental and spiritual pursuits, to promote the interests of the soul, those who derive the benefit of the spiritual man's seclusion and studies, should share with him the benefit of their labors and commerce?

To wish that it were otherwise, betrays such a perversion of mind, and such a destitution of all just moral feeling, as is utterly inconsistent with common honesty, apart from all consideration of the nobler impulses of the Christian religion. For the flock to desire the advantages of the minister's exertions, his mental solicitude and physical powers, while he receives no adequate support from their worldly gains, is as manifestly unequal and unjust, as it would be for the minister to be supported by their labors, and do nothing for them in return.

Let us now inquire,

II. *The extent to which this duty should be carried.*

If Christ has not prescribed how much we shall give, say some hypocritical pretenders to religion, we may assign the merest pittance, and not violate any express precept. Yet, replies the genuine disciple of Christ, are there not certain considerations that furnish some clue by which we may judge of our duty to Christ and his servants? May

we not consider what measures will best answer the ends of justice; most fully accord with the language of Scripture; most effectually promote the interests of the church, and provide for the salvation of the world? If we can ascertain these points, will they not furnish us with an imperative rule? To what extent, then, should a church provide for the support of its ministers, so as,

1. To satisfy the claims of *justice?*

I say *justice*, for so the Scriptures speak, and I most strenuously deny that it comes under the head of charity, or alms. For who ever supposed, that when any one had labored hard for them all day, it was mere *charity* to pay him at night? On this footing our support is placed by Christ: "The laborer is worthy of his hire," or "of his meat." What proprietor ever complimented himself for his charities, because he paid the steward who watched over his property, and secured to him his income?

Nor will that Christian who employs an unbiassed understanding on the subject, assign the contribution to the ministry to any other class of expense than the payment of just debts, recompense given for services performed.

The question arises, then, what sum is necessary to answer the ends of justice? To determine this, we must compare the services of ministers with those of others who benefit society by their talents and their toils. Mental services are adjudged worthy of a higher recompense than mere physical or bodily powers; because they demand the exercise of the higher qualities of our nature, and are more difficult to be procured than mere muscular force. If, then, the recompense given to physicians, counsellors, and others, whose intellect benefits their fellow-men, be the standard, I ask whether ministers are justly paid? Are they not frequently put off with that which is given to the mechanic or laborer for mere muscle and sinew?

Our surprise and censure are increased, when we observe, that the same persons who adjudge the lowest recompense demand the loftiest talent. They are never satisfied, without such powers in the pulpit as would, in any other place, secure a fortune, and yet refuse to allow the minister a mere living. Is this justice?

Others, while securing to themselves a fortune, by the very habits of reflection, industry, frugality, and integrity, which the ministry first taught, and still cherishes, would be alarmed at the mention of such a salary for the minister, as would enable him to make the slenderest provision for a future day. Is this justice?

Would not that venerable quality require, that, if a man is placed in a certain rank in society, he should be enabled to support himself and his family in such a way as will permit him to mingle with persons of that rank, without exciting in their minds or his own, reflections on his poverty? Yet there are some persons who would be shocked at the appearance of degradation in their minister or his family, while the slightest reflection might convince them that they had never contributed that which should enable him to spare their feelings or his own. Is this justice?

If others think it the duty of good husbands and fathers to provide for their widows and orphans, should not a minister, who is equally subject to mortality, be a husband and a father as tender and faithful as any of his flock? Most readily I admit, that this care for a temporal futurity is often carried to guilty extremes, from which a minister should stand afar off. The same duty, however, lies upon his hearers. Covetousness and worldly care are sins in them, as well as in him; and if there is any degree, in which it is lawful for a Christian to provide for those who are dear to him in the event of his death, in that degree it is lawful for a minister. Yet, how few are the preachers of the

Gospel who can, from the income of their ministry, provide both for their family while they live, and for the widow and orphan they may leave at death? That the income of ministers ceases at their death is well known. And should *they* be cast upon the charity of the churches, who have been identified with him that had a claim in equity for himself, and the wife of his bosom, and the children of his care? Is this justice?

Christians declare, with equal truth and warmth, that the ministry so demands the whole man, that no employment will less admit of a divided heart: they are quick-sighted to perceive when a minister gives but a moiety of his powers to their edification, and yet they leave him to be distracted by all the solicitudes attendant on a straitened income. Is this justice?

A minister's salary is often so inadequate, that, unless he could work miracles to multiply the loaves and fishes, they will not hold out; if he is not a man of criminal insensibility to the claims of justice, he must be distracted with solicitude to devise the ways and means to meet his creditors; or he must employ the larger part of his time in secular labors for his support. His hearers know he is not endued with the power of working miracles; they insist upon his being a man of high sense of justice; they will have all his time, and will not increase his income. Is this justice?

I turn to show to what extent ministers should be provided for, in order,

2. To accord with the *language of Scripture.*

The Lord has ordained, that "they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel," not *starve* of the Gospel, but so live by it, as "they who served at the altar of old lived by the altar." For the fair construction of this inspired passage is, that *such* a remuneration as the tribe of

Levi enjoyed under the ancient dispensation, the Christian ministry should now receive. What this was, we may learn from what has already been said, that a twelfth part of the population had a tenth of the produce of the land, besides cities with their suburbs, and certain parts of the offerings of the Lord. From this, and from the ancient Sacred History, we may learn, that the ministers of religion were not intended to be depressed to the rank of paupers, but were enabled to live about as comfortably as any of the ordinary inhabitants of the land, neither pining in poverty, nor rioting in wealth.

Nor can any thing less than this accord with the duty of ministers of the Gospel, who are enjoined to be "ready to every good work," and to be "examples to the flock" of all that is useful and benevolent. Is it possible that this can be a duty in ministers who are to be provided for by you, and that it should be your duty only to provide for them so scantily as to make it impossible for them to do more than pay the debts necessarily contracted to procure food and raiment for their own house?

Are they not enjoined to be "given to hospitality," that they may entertain the strangers, who will often apply to the pastor as to a common public friend? Have not they, therefore, mistaken their duty, who think they make up the minister's support by inviting him often to their table? Can they have studied that Bible, that commands a minister to have a hospitable table of his own? In consistency with this injunction, Paul teaches Timothy by what principles a Christian church should be guided, in their choice and treatment of a bishop, by saying, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn; and the laborer is worthy of his

reward." A niggardly spirit towards ministers may be learned from the Koran or the Shasters, sooner than from the blessed volume of inspired Truth.

Again, my friends, I entreat you to consider to what extent you should provide for your ministers, in order,

3. To promote the *highest interests of the Church.*

As the spirit of Inspiration charges a young minister to "give himself *wholly* to these things, that his profiting may appear to all; for no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him that hath chosen him to be a soldier;" we are taught that an *undivided attention to the ministry* is essential to the edification of the church, and the approbation of Christ. In fact, our Lord, whose laws are our mercies, ordained that ministers should be supported free from worldly labors, in order that you might have the full benefit of their undivided attention and their utmost elasticity of mind. And when there are several hundreds of persons collected in one Christian society, it is manifestly to their highest interest to determine to maintain their minister entirely free from all temporal cares and pursuits, that they may enjoy the full benefit of his time, his talents, his thoughts, his heart. But, when the support they allow is so scanty that he cannot live without adding to his income the profits of some secular employment; or when, in attempting to avoid that which he fears will eat out the heart of the *minister,* he is so entangled with the difficulties of making his pittance hold out, that he is haunted with anxious cares; they cannot possibly receive the full benefit of his labors, but are robbed of the pleasure and the profit they might have derived from the unobstructed spring of his mind, and the generous flow of his soul. In worldly professions, men are enabled to rise superior to this pressure, by the direct hope, that professional exertions will extricate them from pecuniary embar-

rassments. But woe to the pastor and the flock, where the fires of the pulpit are of that unhallowed kind that are kindled by the mercenary desire of earning a morsel of bread. The church, therefore, is left without remedy; and if the evil arise from want of inclination, rather than ability to support their minister, *it is aggravated by all the weight of the Saviour's anger, who will call them to answer for their sin, when pastor and people shall be judged at his bar.*

I am not ignorant of the wretched apologies that are sometimes urged. "It is dangerous for a minister to be rich!" And is it not for the *hearers* too? And are you not afraid of increasing the hazards of your *own* soul, by adding to *your* wealth all that you withhold from him? And have you sincerely risen to that exalted height, of loving your minister better than yourself; so that you would watch for his security from the snares of wealth, at the price of increasing your own danger of being found among them that "shall hardly enter into the kingdom of God?"

But "troubles are good for ministers, who preach better under the rod!" Thus the epicure torments the creatures of God, that they may afford him a more delicious treat! As if the world and the devil would not furnish ministers with troubles enough, unless the flock for whom they labor add *starvation* to the list! But "we preach better for affliction!" A broken heart, I know, is good for prayer, but it is bad for preaching. In the pulpit, the *joy* of the Lord is our strength. Then we reign and triumph over your hearts, when you reign and triumph over ours. If we preach better under the rod, it is when that rod is in the hand of God, not in yours.

But, to turn from cavils which scarcely admit of serious replies, I ask again, if a minister's wife be afflicted, and he be obliged to nurse her himself, because he cannot afford to pay one for giving her the attentions that are her due,

can the hearers hope that he will come from the incessant watchings of a sick chamber, like a giant refreshed with new wine? Or when his children need education, and he is compelled to teach them at home, because the bills of a school would swallow up his whole income, *how can he come from the horn-book, the grammar, and the slate, on fire with sacred meditations, to pour forth the full tide of hallowed eloquence,* and give to ancient, well-known truths, all the charms they may derive from novel and surprising illustrations?

When, again, the apostle says to the young evangelist, "give attendance to reading," he supposes that he has books, and these demand money. But I have unhappily known a fine mind, athirst for information, that would have poured forth the treasures it might have acquired from reading, into the hearts of his hearers, stunted in its growth, for want of the resources which a library would have furnished, and which a generous people would have afforded, and *doomed to chastise their covetousness by the repetition of old things.* No punishment is severer than that which is inflicted by the reaction of our own sin.

Consider too, my friends, that the church of God is bound to have ministers who enjoy a good report of them that are without. This, however, in great measure depends on yourselves. I once heard a person speak of the usefulness of a minister thus: "If he were doing much good to that people, they would give him a better coat."

If it be objected that we should not attach too much importance to the opinion of the world, for our grand concern should be, to know what is Christ's estimation of our conduct, I most readily grant the truth. And are we not assured that an apostle, under infallible inspiration, was delighted with the generosity of a certain church towards him, because it redounded to their high advantage before

the throne of heaven? "I desire not a gift, but fruit that may abound to your account. But I have received that from you, which is an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice well-pleasing to God. My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ."

And is that which is given to his servants, a grateful odor to their Lord? And must we not wish that heaven may smell such perfumes from you? Who can refrain from tears, when he thinks of those from whom Christ never receives such an offering, but is insulted with their covetousness and injustice? Alas, that he should have to look down, and blush to know, that these persons are called by the sacred name of Him who impoverished himself to make us for ever rich!

But here, again, we see a reaction in the moral, like that which prevails in the physical world! For that Saviour who is pleased with all that is, like himself, generous and kind, rewards this spirit in the flock, by kindling in the breast of its pastor that affection for their persons, and solicitude for their souls, which give to his thought all the beauties of the bow of heaven, and to his voice all the sweetness of angelic tones. But how can this be expected by a people, whose ungenerous treatment renders it difficult for their minister to do much more than forgive their wickedness! It is reserved for a *liberal* congregation to hear strains like those which Paul addressed to the Philippian church.

To the last consideration that may show us the extent to which ministers should be supported, I now advance. We should consider,

4. What may best promote the *conversion of the world.*

The church should consider itself placed in the earth, as a golden candlestick, to hold out the light of divine truth to a benighted world; that, from this centre, the rays

of heaven may dart forth in every direction, till the whole earth shall believe on Him whom the Father hath sent. No clime, no class, no character should be excluded from our benevolence. A minister, therefore, should be enabled to gain admittance into every rank of society. He should not be so exalted as to be beyond the reach of a poor man, nor so depressed as to be beneath the notice of the rich; but should stand in that happy mediocrity that will permit him to lay his hands on both extremes. I plead not for great wealth. If, however, ministers are so poor as to be unable to gain access to persons of wealth, who have souls to be saved or lost, as well as others, how can we be said to do our utmost for the salvation of men? A minister should be rich enough to give a shilling, or, if needful, a guinea, in a case of distress. In fact, the men of the world, both rich and poor, do expect a minister to give; and they will very much esteem or despise him, according as they find him generous or covetous.

But a minister should be enabled to show a generous spirit, by having a liberal income. On the conversion of the world he should set his heart, and for this he should "devise liberal things." Poverty, however, shrivels the soul. Let, then, your ministers find access to every class of society; be men of general science and literature, who can mingle in conversation on every subject, to turn it to good account; and, by the stimulus of their own example, teach the world the love of God and man.

A person with a large and generous heart, will often think of the handsome manner in which a whole people ought to support that one man who is, or who wishes to be, incessantly laboring for their good. He spurns at the thought of clogging the wings of an angel, or pressing down to earth one who would bear others with him in his flight to heaven: and he who has just views of himself, will aim

to inspire them in the minds of others; for, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak."

Some, however, soothe themselves by saying, "But our minister is contented." How do they know? "Because he does not complain." What, then, must a minister's delicacy always be tried, by being left to suffer until he is compelled to complain? Is this generous? Ought not his people to think it their duty to consider whether he has not *reason* to complain, and, if they are conscious that he has, should they not determine to spare his feelings, by never leaving him to ask for that addition to his income which they feel to be his due?

The mischief sometimes done by want of liberality among the rich, is incalculable. It is a blight that withers the fruits of all around. For a plain, and even poor man, would willingly give his proportion; but he says, if such a rich man gives only five dollars, then five shillings, or even five pence, are as much as can be expected from me. But the rich man replies, "I have so many other expenses which you do not know." "True," says the other, "I give you credit for them; but then, you support all the other expenses, and think you must, in order to maintain your station in society. Why is this, which you owe to a minister, the only expense you throw off from your shoulders? Or is it only in religion, that it is genteel to be penurious? But as when wise people find their expenses beyond their income, they begin to reduce them, we must suppose that you are doing so, and have begun with religion, as that for which you care least. But you have begun there many years ago, and we have not seen the reduction in other things yet."

O Thou, whose omnipotence can accomplish what to us is impossible, and cause even a rich man to enter thy kingdom, make them to whom thou hast committed ten talents,

faithful over many things; and inspire in their hearts the language of thy servant: "Lord, deliver me from men of the world, who have their portion in this life; who are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake in thy likeness."

There are, however, many who would not be placed among the richest, but whose expenditure is several hundred pounds a year; who get their own praise, at the marvellously cheap rate of giving one guinea every year, to support a minister to whom they profess to be attached. Were I to speak as a man, I should censure in strong terms such stinted benevolence. But as a Christian and a minister, I had rather drop the tear of bitter regret and deep commiseration: regret, for the reproach brought on the religion of Jesus; and commiseration for the men who have not learned, even from such a master as Christ, how blessed it is to give.

But I should hope, that these persons have erred, in a great measure, through inconsideration. They have never reflected, what proportion their expenses for religion bear to all their other expenditures. They have never once thought that they give to a minister one-seventh part of what they pay to a maid-servant; and, perhaps, they keep two or three of these. But some will say, Our servant is our own, who spends all her time for us alone; while the minister serves many others, every one of whom ought to contribute.

This I do not forget. But you say, that from the Gospel you receive more delight, and expect more benefit, than from any earthly service; and all we wish is, to bring you, and every other person who enjoys the sound of the Gospel from the minister's lips, to contribute in such proportion as will produce a comfortable income.

As we come down to the lower ranks of life, we are reminded of what a shrewd person once said: "I pay more for the lowest article of my dress than for my soul." It costs multitudes much more for insuring their houses than for instructing their minds. We are also compelled to say, that the very persons who are excused, through mere poverty, from contributing at all to support the man by whom they are taught, often spend as much on their pleasures as others give for the pastor's support.

Many excuse themselves from making an adequate recompense to a minister, because, they say, "he is a man of fortune, and does not need it." To this I have two replies.

First: Are you sure that this is true? I plead for ministers with more earnestness, because I can declare, before heaven and earth, that I believe they are often the most liberal subscribers to the cause of religion which the church of God contains. Many of them, who cannot be considered rich men, but may rather be called poor, yet contribute with a spirit that may put others to shame. They will go to associations, and missionary meetings, at an expense which they can ill afford, because they know that these useful objects would, without them, languish and die; while some far richer persons stay at home, not merely to gain money by attendance to business, which it is often their duty to do, but sometimes, also, because they do not choose to afford the expense of travelling. I see on the lists of subscriptions the guinea of a minister, when the names of far richer men are attached to no greater sum. If you judge by these signs, you may conclude the minister to be rich, when it is not his property, but his liberality, which is thus proved.

But a *second reply* demands notice. If it should be true, and a minister should be rich, what can that have to

do with the payment of your just debts? If you enter the shop of a tradesman, you never inquire after his private property, before you pay your bills. When a medical man has given you his time and talents, you would not think of refusing to reward him because he was a man of fortune.

And by what rule of righteousness is a minister to be the only person whose services are to be unpaid, because he happens to be rich? When Christ says, the spiritual "laborer is worthy of his reward," he does not add, "except he should be rich;" and why should you add this exception? But you say, "he does not need to receive it." To which I reply, *but you need to give it.* Do *your* duty, and let him judge concerning his. But you think, that if Providence has blessed him with abundance, he ought to *give* away as much as his salary would produce. Well, let *him* give it away. Do not assume to yourself the right to give it for him. And if you do not pay it to him, do *you* really give it away to the poor, or to the heathen? Are there not instances in which it is retained for *yourselves?* What, then, are *you* the poor persons whom he is to relieve, because he is rich? The very persons who, perhaps, are, after all, richer than himself.

But, supposing him to be able to labor without receiving his full recompense, to whom should he give that advantage. To a rich and covetous people? Not if he values his accountability to Him who entrusted him with property; who has said, "he that robbeth the poor, and he that giveth to the rich," are alike guilty in his sight. *No: if I spend my life and labors for nothing, it must be to benefit a people who cannot repay them; not for those who will not.* And he is not worthy of the name and office of a Christian minister, who would not esteem it a high privilege to be able thus to preach to a flock, who could

not otherwise enjoy the Gospel of Christ. Yet, even there, he would be their best friend who would see that they did all they could to repay their minister, though he should give it back among them a hundred fold.

I cannot close without recurring to the solicitude with which I commenced. Some may harden themselves in their sins, by pretending to think that this has been a mercenary discourse. But I would most *tenderly warn you, my friends, that you will find, at the last day, that many a pious youth has sacrificed the prospect of a fortune, and many a minister endured severe poverty, to devote their lives to win you from that love of the world to which you are sacrificing your soul.* But how precious must be your soul, and how desirable your salvation, for the sake of which others will endure that poverty which you would rather lose your soul than bear!

Nor can I conclude without reminding my brethren in the ministry, that though I have endeavored to prove our claims on the liberality of our flocks, *no pen of man, or tongue of angel, can declare all that intensity of mind, or fidelity of labor, which we owe to the souls committed to our care.* Let not any mercenary attention to your temporal dues shed a blighting mildew over the pasture to which you lead your flock. You can scarcely ever say or do much about your own income, without injuring yourselves and your charge. Consecrate yourselves to serve Christ's interest, and trust him to take care of yours.

For the liberal friends, whose hearts have echoed, as I know some do, to all that I have said on the minister's behalf, I return to God our grateful vows, that the generous sacrifices you have made for our support may be abundantly repaid. "But this I say, he who soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he who soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully. Every man, according as he pur-

poseth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound towards you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

How beauteous are their feet
Who stand on Zion's hill!
Who bring salvation on their tongues,
And words of peace reveal.

How charming is their voice!
How sweet the tidings are!
"Zion, behold thy Saviour King;
He reigns and triumphs here."

How happy are our ears,
That hear this joyful sound,
Which kings and prophets waited for,
And sought, but never found!

How blessed are our eyes,
That see this heavenly light;
Prophets and kings desired it long,
But died without the sight!

The watchmen join their voice,
And tuneful notes employ;
Jerusalem breaks forth in songs,
And deserts learn the joy. WATTS.

No. 148.

THE

BARREN FIG-TREE.

"Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"

One morning, about the close of December, a farmer went into his orchard to cut down an apple-tree, which for several years had yielded no fruit. Whilst employed in the work, the minister, walking near, was induced to stop; and after the usual salutations, inquired why he destroyed the tree, as it did not appear a very old one.

Farmer. It is like a good many people, sir; it looks better than it is. I have these ten years been looking for fruit from it, and not one apple has it borne: all my other trees of the same planting generally do well; and this in the spring blossoms, but never bears. I have been several times tempted to cut it down and plant another in its place, but have every time thought, I will try it another season: so it has stood till now, and it is just as barren as ever. I determined, therefore, to wait no longer, but to cut it down and burn it.

MINISTER. Your judgment, sentence, and destruction of this fruitless tree remind me of our Lord's parable of the *Barren Fig-tree.* He tells us, "A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." Like your tree, it was not planted in a barren and neglected waste, where it might be injured both by man and beast, or storm and tempest; but it stood in a *vineyard,* in a spot surrounded by a fence, in the midst of an enclosure; and so situated as to be cultivated by the overseer of the vineyard, and pruned when needful, whilst it possessed all the advantages of summer and winter, rain and sunshine. That parable, however, was designed to remind us of what God has done for *us,* of what he requires of *us,* and how we disobey him. It shows us his patience; he waits for us year after year—but at last, if we continue his enemies, the sentence will be pronounced, "Cut them down; why cumber they the ground?" Have you ever thought, my friend, of what God requires of you? He has planted you in his vineyard, and he looks for fruit; he has created you, and he preserves you, giving you life, and health, and all things: he has given you a law to keep, and the fruit he requires is obedience to that law; and do you think you have yielded him any?

FARMER. Why, sir, I have a large family to provide for; and I find, if people do not work they cannot get along: one must attend to his business. I thank God, I give every man his due; what I get comes by hard earning; I am not one of them who would wish to get any thing by cheating my neighbors. As for being very religious, which is what you mean I suppose I cannot say that

I am: at night I am glad to get to rest, and on Sunday I think sometimes I would like to go to church; but we farmers have so much to look after that we cannot get out.

MINISTER. Perhaps you mean, you *will not* get out; for where there is a will, there will generally be a way. If you were to set your heart upon going to church and reading the Bible with prayer, you would find time to do it. I know the farmer has a laborious life; and if he be one, like you, honest and industrious, he will always find enough to do; but he cannot be excused from serving God. From your own confession, then, it appears you are as barren, in a Scriptural sense, as this tree; and in your conduct towards it, you have been passing sentence against yourself. Now, my friend, allow me to point out the resemblance between your case and that of the barren fig-tree in the parable of our Lord, which I mentioned. You live in a highly favored land, emphatically the land of freedom; we may all say the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage; God has hitherto been as a wall of fire round about us, and the glory in the midst of us; we live in a land of *Bibles;* the light of Christ shines around us; we have God's word, which we may procure at a small expense, and read in our own language; that blessed word, too, is made the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation to many among us; and we see it. We have our *Sabbaths* in regular order, when we may attend the house of God, and by his blessing on the ministry of the Gospel, may enjoy his favor, obtain the forgiveness of our sins, and a good hope of a blessed immortality. We have *Sabbath-schools* also for the young, where they are collected from the paths of the destroyer and trained up in the way in which they should go. And indeed every *example* and every *encouragement* is now afforded us for being "diligent in business," and at the same time "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Once, a real Christian was laughed at as an object of contempt; but now, how many thousands, of all ages and conditions, are pressing forward towards the

everlasting kingdom of God our Saviour. So that to us may be fully applied the congratulation of our Lord: "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; for prophets and kings desired to see the things which ye see, and have not seen them." Verily, you may well be said to be planted in the vineyard of the Lord.

FARMER. I certainly agree with you, sir, about our country; we live in a land of liberty. As for Sabbath-schools, they are the best things we could have. There used to be more noise and mischief with children on Sunday than any other day; and it kept one continually watching to drive them off our grounds and hedges.

MINISTER. You allow, then, that you have many privileges for which you ought to be thankful: now look a little farther, and you will see what God requires for these. The owner of the vineyard "came seeking fruit;" and what could be more reasonable? In this way I act with my garden. In this way you act with your orchard. Now, the fruit which God looks for is this: having given us the knowledge of his holy will, which is contained in the Scriptures, he demands our obedience, in thought, word, and deed. As we have all failed in this instance, having "done the things which we ought not to have done, and left undone the things which we ought to have done," he requires our repentance. As he has sent his dear Son into the world to save penitent sinners, he expects that we shall seek his mercy and grace "to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And as the compassionate Saviour will receive all, and cast out none that apply to him earnestly—and without such an application we must perish for ever—God requires that we neglect not this great salvation. We should go, then, to his house, and hear his Gospel. Faith cometh by hearing; and that faith will lead and unite the soul to Christ; and holiness in heart, conversation, and life, will follow. For, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, which he will grant to those who ask him, we shall be led into the way of truth, and be taught to deny

ungodliness and worldly lusts; and live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present evil world.

Now, in order to produce such fruits, how many times has the Lord pruned us by affliction, pain, trials, losses, disappointments, in body, in mind, and in our circumstances. And how natural that, after all his kindness and care, he should come seeking fruit. But the proprietor, thus paying his annual visit to the vineyard, complains, "*Lo, these three years I come seeking fruit, and find none.*" How patient and long-suffering is our God to bear with us as long as *three* years! For with what ease could he remove us by death, even at the end of *one* year, and place others in our stead, "bringing forth the fruits of righteousness." But what shall we think when we consider how *many* years some of us have been unfruitful and useless? For twenty, nay, thirty, nay, even for forty years, has the Lord of the vineyard looked for your improvement, but looked in vain. And during this space, how carefully have you served yourself, whilst you neglected the glory of God, whose you are by nature, to whom you must shortly give an account, and whom you ought to serve in sincerity and truth, in body, soul, and spirit, which are his.

But let us notice the *sentence* which was passed. He said to the vine-dresser, "*Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?*" This, my good friend, has been your command in the instance now before us, and it is just; for, by removing this fruitless tree, you may supply its place by a better. And can we form a different opinion of unrighteous persons? Who can tell what injury their bad example may do? If they are masters, or parents, or even neighbors, by neglecting their own salvation they sanction the neglect of others around them. Hence our Lord has said, "He that is not with me, is against me." So that we perceive there are no neutrals—if we are not his friends, we are his enemies. But, oh, how dreadful would this sentence be! To be called hence in the midst of your days, without hope, without mercy, and cast into the fire of hell, with all your

sins upon you, under the weight of God's displeasure! This would be the fulfilment of that solemn passage, "Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh." How useless will it then be for you to say, "I have paid every one his own; I have been industrious and careful, attentive to my family and to my business." If your soul is lost, what will you be profited by all this? All this only concerns your duty to your neighbor; but how have you fulfilled your duties to God? "These things ought you to have done, and not to have left the other undone." For what is the body when compared to the immortal soul? What is time when compared to eternity? And who can tell how soon this sentence against you may be put in execution? Even this night, when deep sleep falleth upon others, *your* soul may be required of you; and then whose shall these things be which you have so anxiously gained? Hence you perceive that the Most High has judgment as well as mercy, justice as well as patience; and whilst he is "long-suffering" towards the truly penitent, he will "by no means clear the guilty," who still go on in sin, and live without God in the world.

The farmer acknowledged the force of these remarks; said he knew they were all very true, and he hoped the Lord would have mercy upon him, and not take him out of this world until he was prepared for a better.

Minister. Your wish is very natural; every one must be concerned for his safety, even for this life; how much more for that life which is to come? But here is a great error; too many are only anxious about their future welfare at the moment when alarming considerations are pressing on their minds; but their convictions soon wear away, and they become as thoughtless as before. Like a person in a storm at sea, he will anxiously cry for mercy whilst the waves roar around him, and promise, should he be preserved, to lead a

new life; but when the storm is over, his repentance is often like the morning cloud and the early dew, it soon passeth away.

There is one other circumstance to which I would advert: I mean the *intercession of the vine-dresser, that the tree thus condemned might be tried one year longer; and then, if it bore no fruit, if it were still a cumberer of the ground,* he would withdraw his hopes and his regard for its safety, and plead for it no more. This was granted. It was to be spared—it was to be tried yet another year. Without doubt, this part of the parable is to point out the compassionate intercession of Christ on behalf of unprofitable sinners. It is wholly on account of his plea that any barren soul is spared. But observe how his request is limited: it does not extend to *years,* but only to *one* year longer; then, if it be still unfruitful, it shall be hewn down and cast into the fire. Righteousness shall then be added to the line, and truth to the plummet. The exercise of the Lord's long-suffering will then be exhausted. The great destroyer of the nations shall receive his commission. The axe shall be laid to the root of the tree. The last decisive blow shall be given, and the unbeliever left without excuse.

Perhaps, reader, this is God's determination respecting you. Perhaps from this very day he intends to give you one year more, and *only one.* During this space he may also design to send you trials, or afflictions, in his providence, to prune you; or he may compassionately send you his peculiar blessing, to act like the manure at the root of the tree; but all with the merciful intention of trying you yet *another year.* But if unhappily you should still remain in the same state as before, you can expect nothing but tribulation and wrath; and, sooner or later, "swift destruction from the presence of the Lord," who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men. Or, if your life should even be spared beyond the year, the judgment of God may be still poured out upon you. He may withdraw all kind of restraint: conscience may cease to convict;

providence may cease to chastise; friends may cease to caution; ministers may cease to warn; till at length, by one tremendous stroke, God may take you from this place of sinning, and cast you into the gulf of despair, where the worm of anguish never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

The farmer, wiping away an involuntary tear, acknowledged himself the *Barren Fig-tree*. "I have done nothing for God," said he; "I have neglected the Lord Jesus Christ and his salvation. I have profaned his Sabbaths. I have been ungrateful for all his goodness to me. I have abused his patience. Instead of yielding him any fruit, I have been striving to get a few dollars together, and to lay up the things of this world. O what a wonder that the Lord has not long before this cut me down! I will not any longer live as I have done: by the help of God, I will change my course of life; if I am spared till another Sabbath, it shall find me in the house of prayer, and may I be enabled so to trust in the merits of Christ, that I shall find mercy."

With tears of joy glistening in his eye, the minister replied, "My friend, let me give you one word of caution: do not make these promises, good as they are, *in your own strength*, as that will produce pride, instead of humble dependence on the grace of God; but seeing their importance, carry them before God; make them the matter of *secret prayer;* be humble before him for the sins of the past; seek forgiveness through the blood of Christ; implore the gift of the Holy Ghost to renew your heart, and his grace to strengthen and be sufficient for you. Then you will realize that promise, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.'"

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CHRIST
FORMED IN THE SOUL,

THE

ONLY FOUNDATION OF HOPE FOR ETERNITY.

ADDRESSED TO THE YOUNG.

BY REV. PHILIP DODDRIDGE, D. D.

It was the unhappy case of Agrippa, that though almost, he was only almost, persuaded to be a Christian; and I fear it is now the case of many, and particularly of many *young persons*, who have enjoyed the advantages of a religious education.

I believe it is difficult to find any among them who have not been brought, at some time, under serious impressions. With regard to the internal operations of the blessed Spirit, as well as external means, the morning of life is generally to them, in a peculiar sense, the day of their visitation; and they often seem to know it, and in some measure to improve it: but, in too many instances, we find their goodness as a morning cloud, and as the early dew, which soon passeth away. The blossoms open fair and beautiful, and give a very agreeable prospect of plentiful fruits of holiness in the life; but too often, when storms of temptation and corruption arise, the goodly appearance is laid in ruins; the

blossoms fall to the ground, and leave the tree blasted and naked, or at best, covered only with the leaves of an external profession, which, however green and flourishing they may for the present be, will not at last secure it from being "cut down, and cast into the burning." Though they for a while had escaped the pollutions of the world through lust, they are afterwards entangled and subdued; and the consequence is, they prove a scandal to religion, and a discouragement to others, till, in the end, they bring aggravated destruction on themselves; so that, on the whole, as the apostle observes, "it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than" thus, "after they have known it, to turn aside from the holy commandment."

These are matters of universal importance. But, though I hope my remarks may be useful to all, I would, at present, address them especially to THE YOUNG. I hope there are some among you who are experimentally acquainted with the essence of Christianity, and have received from above an "incorruptible seed." There are others, to whom I must say, with the apostle to the Galatians, "I stand in doubt of you;" and to such I hope I can apply myself, in the language of the same apostle, "*My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you.*" Pardon me, if, in this instance, "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy." I would endeavor, with the sincerest and tenderest affection, and with such freedom as the importance of the case requires, first to guard you against those *sandy foundations*, which will bury you and your hopes in eternal ruin; and then to direct you to "*the Rock of ages*," on which they who build shall "*never be ashamed.*"

I therefore entreat your serious attention, and would humbly ask, both for myself and you, the teachings of that blessed *Spirit*, whose peculiar office it is, in the most

efficacious manner, to show you your danger and your remedy.

I. I would caution you against several things, on which *young persons* are peculiarly prone to build A FALSE CONFIDENCE.

As you love your own souls, and value your eternal hopes, *trust not* to the privileges of your birth, or the rectitude of your speculations in matters of religion, or the purity and frequency of your forms of worship, or the warmth of your passions, or the morality of your conduct; for none of these apart, nor even all of them united, can, according to the tenor of the Gospel, be sufficient for your security and happiness.

1. Trust not to the privileges of your *birth* and *education*, as the foundation of your eternal hopes.

You may be ready to plead, that you were born of pious parents, and have been brought up in the most regular and conscientious manner: you have been surrounded with holy instructions and correspondent examples, from your infancy; and fervent prayers, both in the family and in secret, have been sent up to heaven upon your account. These are, indeed, signal advantages, and you may justly rejoice in them: for, in these respects, you are the children of the kingdom: but rejoice with trembling; for our Lord hath told us, that it is more than a possible case that the children of the kingdom may be cast out, and have their portion in utter darkness.

The piety of your parents may, perhaps, be abused by some of you, as an encouragement to presumptuous hopes. But remember, that Ishmael was the son of Abraham, and Esau of Isaac, and yet neither the one nor the other inherited the blessing of his father. Remember that beautiful, but dreadful parable, which represents a wretched creature in hell, that could cry, *Father* Abraham, and yet in vain

added, have mercy upon me, and send me a drop of water to cool my tongue. Once more, remember those emphatical words of John the Baptist, so expressly levelled against this arrogant presumption. "Think not," says he, "to say within yourselves, we have Abraham for our father; for I say unto you, that God is able, of these stones, to raise up children unto Abraham:" as if he had said, "The promises made to those who are the *children* of Abraham, respect not merely them who are lineally descended from him, but those who are the heirs of his piety and faith; for if God were to turn these stones into men, and to form them by his grace to a holy character and temper, such, though descended from no human parents at all, would, in the sense of the promise, be *children* of Abraham." And it were more reasonable to expect such a transmutation, than that God should acknowledge "a generation of vipers" as his people, because they were derived from *holy ancestors.*

On the contrary, God directly assures us, that if the son of the most religious father forsake the way of virtue and holiness, and prove as "the degenerate plant of a strange vine," "in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die." And surely herein the ways of the Lord are equal; for it is most evident, that a long descent from God's people is a reproach and condemnation, rather than an honor, to those who abandon that good old way in which their ancestors have trod, and which was the care and the glory of preceding generations.

2. Trust not to the *correctness of your sentiments,* in matters of religion, as the foundation of your eternal hopes.

So various are the workings of men's hearts, and the devices of Satan, that, if I mistake not, there are some that place their confidence in the strictness, and others in the latitude of their religious opinions; but the one and the

other will appear equally vain, when considered in the view now before us.

Some may possibly persuade themselves that their condition is secure, because their sentiments are orthodox. They live, perhaps, in the midst of the unbelieving and profane, and see daily contempt and derision thrown upon the blessed Gospel, or its most glorious peculiarities; but through the influence of a good education, or from some other principle, short of true piety, they may, nevertheless, not only hold fast the faith once delivered to the saints, but even contend earnestly for it: they are, perhaps, learned in the controversies of the time, and can, indeed, pronounce concerning them in a very rational and accurate manner.

If this, my friends, be the case with any of you, I congratulate you on the happiness of a well-informed judgment, but must caution you against mistaking it for a sanctified heart. The mystery of faith, as the apostle himself assures us, is to be held with a good conscience; and in vain do you profess to retain the one, while you make shipwreck of the other. As precious a treasure as the knowledge of the truth is, if we go no farther than mere speculation, it will be to you "but as a talent of gold to a man sinking in the sea, which only serves to plunge him so much the deeper in ruin."

There are some who err in the contrary extreme. They pride themselves in having broken the shackles in which others are confined, and in seeing through the mist in which multitudes have been perplexed. They esteem many things which divide the world, as merely *controversies about words;* and are not much concerned about others in which there is a real difference, because they think themselves very sure that the *fundamentals of religion* lie in a very little room. They are confident of the innocency of error, and the safety of an honest mind, under those mistakes which have been

branded by the severest names. A wicked life is, in their esteem, the only dangerous heresy; and *morality* the only thing that is worth contending about. Charmed with their own wisdom and happiness in this freedom of thought, they look down with pity on persons under the influence of a contracted education and narrow sentiments, and possibly mingle their pity with a great deal of scorn, not to say indignation. But they are indeed themselves the objects of much juster pity, if, whilst they glory in their freedom, they are the servants of corruption.

3. Trust not in the external *forms of devotion*, as the foundation of your hopes for eternity.

You are, it may be, joined to some society, which not only wears the Christian name, but separates itself from others, under the apprehension at least of a more pure and scriptural worship. You, perhaps, so much approve and esteem this worship, as to be diligent and constant in attending on the public exercises of it, not only in its stated returns, but on occasional opportunities. You fill your places, from time to time, not merely in obedience to the commands of your parents and governors, but by your own voluntary choice. And, it may be, to these you add the forms of *family devotion* morning and evening, and, possibly, a few moments of daily retirement for reading and prayer. What can such religious persons have *to fear?* Nay, rather, what can you have *to hope*, if, while you "draw near to God with your mouth and your lips," you "remove your hearts far from him?" if, while you "come before him as his people come," and present yourselves in the posture of humble worshippers, "your heart be going after your covetousness?" God hath for ever confounded such vain presumption, by declaring that the prayer of the wicked is an abomination to him; and that *his* shall certainly be so, who "turns away his ear from

hearing the law," that is, who refuses obedience to it. The "servant that knew his Lord's will, and did it not," became justly liable to "be beaten with many stripes;" and it is not to be wondered, if, in this sense, "judgment begin at the house of God," and seize first on those who affront and profane his ordinances, by making them to supersede the very things which they were originally appointed to promote.

4. Trust not to the *warmth of your passions*, in matters of religion, as the foundation of your most important hopes.

Some of you, to whom I now speak, have perhaps experienced very bitter agonies of conscience. You have been roused from the sleep of carnal security, as by an earthquake, which has shaken the very centre of your soul: the flames of hell have seemed, as it were, to flash in your face; and all these mingled horrors have compelled you to cry out, "Woe is me, for I am undone!" Oh, "what shall I do to be saved?" And yet, to allude to the story of Elijah, the "Lord hath not been in the earthquake, or in the fire." Consider to what purpose the inquiry after salvation has been made, and with what resolution it has been pursued; otherwise you may be fatally deceived. The murderers of Stephen were cut to the heart by his preaching, and we are sure that, if the most deep and terrifying convictions could have secured a man's salvation, the traitor Judas would have been safe, who undoubtedly felt the most violent convulsions of soul before he proceeded to that dreadful extremity which sealed him up under everlasting despair.

But you may have been impressed with the *sweeter* and the *nobler* passions; you have not only trembled at the thunder of the law, but rejoiced in the message of Gospel grace. The news of a Redeemer has been welcome to your souls, and the feet of those messengers beautiful,

that have come to publish peace in his name. You have, perhaps, been melted into tears of pleasure and tenderness, when you have heard the representation of his dying love: and when the precious promises established by it have been unfolded, and the prospects of eternal glory displayed, your minds have been elevated and transported; so that you have hung, almost with a trembling eagerness, on the lips of the speaker. I readily acknowledge that such as these are frequently the workings of the blessed Spirit of God upon the souls of his chosen people; and when found in a due connection with the great effects they are designed to produce, are highly to be esteemed and rejoiced in. But remember, I entreat you, that every tear of tenderness, and every sally of joy, does not arise from so divine a spring. You might weep at a mournful scene in a well-wrought tragedy, as you have done at the story of a Redeemer's sufferings; you might find yourselves transported with a fine poetical description of a pagan elysium, or a Mahometan paradise, just as you have been with the views of a heavenly Canaan, which Gospel ordinances have presented. Mere self-love might be the foundation of such a joy in the tidings of pardon and happiness, without the least degree of renewing and sanctifying grace; as it was in those hearers, represented by the "stony ground," who "immediately received the word with joy, but had no root, and so endured but for a while."

But, perhaps you will say, you are confident it is not merely self-love in you, for you have often found your mind impressed with a grateful sense of the divine goodness; so that, when you own it before God in prayer, or converse with his saints on the copious and delightful subject, your souls flow forth in love to your great Benefactor, and you look up to him in the most thankful acknowledgments of his favors. If it be gratitude that captivates

the soul into a willing obedience, and engages you to yield yourselves as willing sacrifices to God, then is Christ formed in your souls, and you are not the persons to whom I would give the alarm; on the contrary, I would rather confirm your hopes, and rejoice with you in them. But if your gratitude does not rise to this; if it rest only in some tender emotion of mind, or some transient external expression of that emotion, I must faithfully tell you, that I fear it is only a nobler degree of that natural instinct, which causeth the ox to know his owner, and the ass his master's crib. To find your spirit in this manner impressed, does indeed plainly prove that the day of your visitation is not entirely past; it proves you have not sinned yourselves into utter insensibility of soul; nay, it may possibly, at length, through the communications of sanctifying grace, lead you on to real religion, and to eminent attainments in it: but at present it falls far short. Thus those illuminations, or those affections, on which you are apt to lay so great a stress, are, perhaps, at best, but the preparatory workings of the Spirit upon your minds, which, if they are not improved, may leave you more hard and more miserable than they found you.

5. Trust not to the *morality of your behavior*, as the foundation of your eternal hopes.

Morality is certainly a very excellent thing, and it were scandalous indeed for any professed Christian to pour contempt upon it. Wherever this is wanting, pretences to faith and Christian experience are not only vain, but insolent and detestable. He that committeth sin is of the devil; and only he that doth righteousness, is righteous: nor hath the grace of God ever savingly appeared to that man, through whatever uncommon scenes of thought he may have passed, who is not effectually taught by it "to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, right-

eously, and godly." But it will by no means follow from thence, that wherever there is a sober and virtuous conduct, such a soul is passed from death to life. If the whole of the Gospel be wrapt up in the rules of morality, "then is Christ dead in vain;" or, at least, it is in vain that the records of his death are published to us. Beware, I entreat you, of so pernicious an error. I think myself obliged more earnestly to caution you against it, because, while the devil is attempting, on the one hand, to engage some, under the specious pretences of an evangelical spirit, "to turn the grace of God into wantonness;" he seems to be ensnaring others, by extolling the virtue which he hates, in order to lead them into a neglect of Christ and his righteousness, and all the peculiarities of the Gospel scheme of salvation; so that it is difficult on the whole to say which of these devices is most destructive to the souls of men.

From my heart I rejoice to think, there are so many amongst you whose character in life is fair and unblemished. You escape the grosser pollutions of the world; you abhor brutal intemperance; you scorn the mean artifices of deceit, and renounce the hidden things of dishonesty; you honor your parents and subordinate governors; you treat the ministers of Christ with respect and esteem; you are affable and courteous in your behavior to all; and on this account we behold you and love you; but alas, if things rest here, you will never enter into the kingdom of heaven. All these things had the young man in the Gospel observed from his youth. But he lacked *one thing;* and the lack of that was the ruin of his soul, as it will be of yours, if you remain destitute of it.

I know that they are especially in danger of being deceived here, who converse frequently with persons of an abandoned character; or who are themselves reformed from some gross irregularities, to which they were once

addicted. Comparing themselves with others, or with themselves in a more licentious and corrupt state, they pronounce a favorable sentence, and conclude they are safe and happy: but let me entreat you, my friends, that you would rather compare your hearts and lives with that perfect law of God which cannot be repealed; weigh yourselves in that balance, and see whether you are not *found wanting* there. Review even the upright conduct of these days of your reformation, and then say whether there be such a redundancy of merit in them as will not only answer present demands, but atone for your past offences too. You will soon be confounded on such a review. You will soon acknowledge, on an impartial examination, that "the bed is shorter than a man can stretch himself upon, and the covering narrower than he can wrap himself in:" that neither you, nor any one living, can be "justified by the works of the law."

The case of St. Paul affords a practical illustration of all that has been advanced. Had the privileges of birth and education been a sufficient security, Paul had been secure before his conversion to Christianity; for he was "circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin"—which had not, like the rest, revolted from the house of David—and by his mother's side, as well as his father's, "*a Hebrew of the Hebrews.*" If the exactest regularity in religious notions, or the strictest formality in the externals of worship, could have secured a man, Paul had been secure; for he was, as touching the law, a Pharisee: he lived according to the rigor of that sect, and, both with respect to doctrines and ceremonies, "was exceedingly zealous of the traditions of the fathers." If a transport of passion in the cause of God could have secured a man, Paul had been secure; for, "concerning zeal, he persecuted the church, and wasted it beyond meas-

ure." And, lastly, if morality of behavior could have done it, Paul had been secure; for, "touching the righteousness which is by the law," he was "blameless." In these things he was once so weak and so wretched as to place a great deal of confidence; but when he was illuminated, and called by divine grace, he assures us, that what things were gain unto him before, those he counted lost for Christ; he renounced all dependence upon them: "yea, doubtless," says he, "and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." But let us consider,

II. What will be a SOLID FOUNDATION for hope and joy, when all these inadequate dependencies fail; or, in other words, what it is to have *Christ formed in the soul.* And here let me entreat you to turn your thoughts inward, that you may judge whether you have been experimentally acquainted with the temper and change which I shall now describe, as signified by this remarkable expression, *Christ formed in you.*

It implies right apprehensions of Christ in the heart; that the man is brought to an explicit choice of him, and deliberately enters into covenant with him; and that, in consequence of both these, something of the temper and spirit of Christ is by divine grace wrought in his soul.

1. It supposes *right apprehensions of Christ in the heart.*

It evidently implies, that the external revelation of him hath not only been admitted as a speculative truth, but attended to as a matter of the highest concern. Previous to the forming of Christ in the soul, there must be a conviction that we are naturally without Christ, and that, in consequence of this, we are in a most unhappy condition. And this conviction must strike deep upon the heart; for,

till the evil of sin be felt, what can make the news of a Saviour welcome? Since, as he himself has declared, "the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.' The man in whose heart Christ is formed, has seen himself condemned by God's righteous law; has seen himself equally unable to answer its demands, or to bear the execution of its penalties. And feeling this to be no light matter, but the very life of his soul, he has then been engaged, with the greatest seriousness and earnestness, to cry out, "Woe is me, for I am undone!" Oh, "what shall I do to be saved?" I have said, there may be these convictions and awakenings, where Christ is never formed in the soul; and I now add, that the degree of them may be various, according to the various tempers and circumstances of different persons; but it is most evident that something of this kind must make way for the Redeemer's entrance, who comes to seek and to save that which was lost; to bind up the broken-hearted; and to give rest to the weary and heavy-laden. And I the rather insist on this, because I am fully persuaded that slight thoughts of sin, and of the misery of our natural estate by it, have been the principal cause of all the infidelity of the present age, and are daily ruining a multitude of souls.

2. The formation of Christ in the soul farther implies *an explicit choice of him*, and a deliberate *entering into covenant with him*.

When such a soul hears of a Redeemer, and of the way of salvation by him, exhibited in Scripture, it cordially approves the scheme, as entirely worthy of its divine author; and though corrupt nature raises a thousand proud thoughts, in a vain and ungrateful rebellion against it, yet they are, by divine grace, subdued and brought into captivity. The man really sees such a suitableness, and such an amiableness, in the blessed Jesus, under the character in which the

Gospel reveals him, that he judges him to be "the pearl of great price;" and as God has laid him as "the foundation-stone," he is, in that view, inconceivably "precious to him." Far from contenting himself with applauding this plan, as regular, beautiful, and magnificent in general, the true believer is solicitous that he may have his own share in this edifice of mercy; and that, "coming to Christ as a living stone," he may himself be one of those who shall "on him be built up for an habitation of God through the Spirit." When he considers the Lord Jesus represented as standing at the door and knocking, it is with pleasure that he hears his voice, and opens to him, and, as Zaccheus did, *receives him joyfully*. He regards him as one on whom he can joyfully fix his eternal hopes, infinitely important as he sees them to be. And while he thus anchors his soul on the righteousness, the atonement, and the intercession of the Redeemer, he humbly bows to his authority, as his Lord and his God. It is his desire to seat him on the throne in his heart, and, as it were, to put into his hand the sceptre and the sword, that all the powers of nature may be governed, and all the corruptions of it destroyed by him. In a word, as he knows that Christ was given for a covenant to the people, he deliberately sets his seal to that covenant, thereby devoting himself to Christ, and to the Father. Such are his views, his purposes, and his engagements; and by divine grace he is enabled to be faithful to them. Which leads me to add,

3. When Christ is formed in any soul, something of the *temper and character of the blessed Jesus* is by divine grace wrought there.

I might with ease multiply Scriptures in proof of the absolute necessity of this; but it is so obvious, that you must yourselves know how expressly it is required. You know how plainly St. Paul has told us, that "if any man

have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his:" and where this spirit resides, Christ dwells in the heart. The same mind, or temper, is in such a one, as was also in Christ Jesus; and as he professeth to abide in him, it is his care so to walk as Christ also walked. On which account the true Christian is said to have "put on Christ," in allusion to the Hebrew phrase, of being clothed with any temper or affection that greatly prevails, or governs in the soul.

It is a very pleasing as well as useful employment, to trace the lineaments of the temper and conduct of Christ in his people. Our Lord is in a peculiar sense the Son of God; but his people are, through him, taken into the same relation: for they "have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear," though perhaps they were once subjected to it, but they "have received the spirit of adoption;" and because they "are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father." By this Spirit a filial temper is wrought in their souls, by which their obedience to their heavenly Father is so animated, as to be most honorable and grateful to him, as well as most easy and delightful to themselves. Under the influences of this Spirit, the Christian desires it may be his character now, as he trusts it will be his happiness at last, to "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth;" to follow that Jesus, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." But when he hath done all, he calls himself an unprofitable servant; yet he sees so much of the internal beauties of holiness, so much lustre and glory in the image of God, as drawn on the soul of man, that it is the great concern of his heart, and labor of his life, to pursue it.

Nor would he only abstain from grosser enormities, and practise those virtues which are most honorable amongst men, and attended with the greatest secular advantage; but

he would, in every respect, "maintain a conscience void of offence," and "perfect holiness in the fear of God." He hath so affectionate a sense of the riches of divine grace, displayed through a Redeemer, in adopting so unworthy a creature as himself to the dignity and privilege of a son of God, that he often cries out in raptures of holy gratitude and joy, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" Inspired with this noble principle, he searches his Father's will impartially; and when he has discovered it, he obeys it cheerfully, and it is his meat and his drink to perform it. He loves the Lord his God above all, and loves his fellow-creatures for his sake as well as their own, and entertains the highest veneration and affection for those who most heartily resemble "his Father and their Father, his God and their God."

It is his prayer, and his endeavor, that he may go about doing good, and be useful to all as he hath opportunity; that he may pass through the world with a holy moderation and superiority of soul to the things which are seen and are temporal; thankfully owning every mercy as proceeding from God's paternal love and care, and serenely submitting to every affliction, as the cup which his Father puts into his hand. In a word, he desires that in all the vicissitudes of life he may still be intent on the views of an everlasting inheritance, humbly looking and longing for that blessed hope, yet willing patiently to wait his Father's time, having this constant expectation, and reviving assurance, that "whether he liveth, he shall live unto the Lord, or whether he dieth, he shall die unto the Lord; so that whether he live or die, he shall be the Lord's."

This is the Christian; this is the man *in whom Christ is formed;* or, rather, these are some faint lineaments of his character. And I will venture to say, that he who cannot discern something in it, even as thus imperfectly described,

which is vastly superior to that morality and decency of behavior which arises merely from prudential views, or from the sweetness and gentleness of a man's natural temper, is sunk below the boasted religion of nature, and must take refuge in the wretched principles of atheism, if he would pretend to form any thing of a consistent scheme.

I cannot conclude without suggesting the following *reflections:*

1. How important is it, that *ministers of the Gospel* should lead *young persons* into such views as these!

Our great and important business in life is to promote the eternal happiness of our hearers, and "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Here, then, let all our labors centre. It is the good old way, in which our fathers in the ministry went, and in which they prospered. Let us follow their steps, and exert our most vigorous efforts here. Modern refinements may amuse us in our closets, but they will never feed the souls of our hearers, nor spread the triumphs of a Gospel, which "is the power of God to salvation." I hope, God is my witness, that I am heartily concerned for the interests of virtue—if by that be meant the advancement of practical religion—but I never expected to see it promoted by the most philosophical speculations concerning its nature, or the finest harangues on its innate beauties, when the name and peculiar doctrines of Christ are thrown off, as unfashionable incumbrances of a discourse. Experienced Christians, who have tasted the bread of life, will not contentedly be put off with such chaff: and if we imagine that the younger part of our auditors may be trained up to a relish for it, we may, perhaps, succeed in the attempt; but I much fear that success will be the calamity of the church, and the destruction of souls.

2. We may learn from hence what are the most valuable proofs of *parental affection.*

Certainly there is no reason to esteem as such that fond indulgence, which suffers ill habits to grow up in the young mind, and fears its present disturbance more than its future ruin; no, nor yet the more prudent care of providing plentiful and agreeable accommodations for the subsistence and delight of your infant offspring, as they advance to maturity and settlement in life. These things, indeed, are not to be neglected; but wretched are the children, and I will add the parents too, where this is the principal labor. Would you express a wise and religious tenderness, for which your children shall have reason to thank you in their dying moments, and to meet you with joy in the interviews of the eternal world, do your utmost that *Christ be formed in their soul;* and let them plainly see that you even travail in birth again, till this happy work be accomplished.

3. How needful is *the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart,* in order to the laying this great foundation.

The idea of Christ being formed in the soul, naturally implies an *agent,* by whom the work is done; and when you consider what kind of a work it is, I appeal to your own consciences, whether it is to be thought merely a human production. Were it only a name, a ceremony, a speculation, or a passion, it would not be worth a moment's dispute, whether *you* or *we* should have the glory of it. But as it is nothing less than the transformation of a corrupt and degenerate creature into the holy image of the Son of God, it were impiety for either to arrogate it to ourselves.

Let the matter, therefore, be brought to a serious and immediate review, and let us judge ourselves by the character described, as those that expect very shortly to be judged of the Lord. If, on the examination, any of you have reason to conclude that you are strangers to it, remem-

ber that the invincible battery of the word of God demolishes all the towering hopes you may have raised on any other foundation. Let conscience then say, whether any amusement, or any business in life, be so important as to be attended to, even for one single day, in neglect of this great concern, on which all the happiness of an immortal soul is suspended. If nothing be indeed found of greater moment, apply yourselves seriously to this, and omit no proper and rational methods of securing it. Consider the ways by which Christ uses to enter into a soul, and wait upon him in those ways. Reflect seriously on your present condition; constantly attend the instructions of his word, and the other solemnities of his worship; and choose to converse intimately with those in whom you have reason to think he is already formed. But in all, remember that the success depends upon a divine coöperation, and therefore go frequently into the presence of God by prayer; go into it this day, or if possible, this hour, and importunately entreat the regenerating and sanctifying influences of his Spirit, which, when you really and earnestly desire them, the Gospel gives you such ample encouragement to expect. But if you have reason to hope that you have already received them, learn to whom the praise should be ascribed; and let it animate you to pray that, through farther communications from the throne of grace, you may be made continually more and more like your Redeemer, till you are prepared for that world where you shall shine forth in his complete resemblance, and shall find it your consummate and eternal felicity. AMEN.

SINNERS INVITED TO CHRIST.

Come, ye weary, heavy laden,
Lost and ruined by the fall;
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all:
Not the righteous—
Sinners Jesus came to call.

Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness he requireth,
Is to feel your need of him.
This he gives you—
'Tis the Spirit's rising beam.

Agonizing in the garden,
Lo! your Maker prostrate lies;
On the bloody tree behold him;
Hear him cry before he dies,
"*It is finished!*"
Sinners, will not this suffice?

Lo! the incarnate God ascended,
Pleads the merit of his blood;
Venture on him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude:
None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good.

Saints and angels, joined in concert,
Sing the praises of the Lamb;
While the blissful seats of heaven
Sweetly echo with his name:
Hallelujah!—
Sinners here may sing the same.

HART.

No. 150.

MEMOIR

OF

WILLIAM CHURCHMAN.

AN AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE.

BY THOMAS BINGHAM,

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I take the liberty to assure the public that the following little narrative is not a work of imagination, nor is it merely *founded* on fact in its principal circumstances. It is literally a true and unadorned relation of events, the bare recollection of which warms my heart after the lapse of several years, and will, I am certain, while it continues to beat; nor can I separate the idea of renewed converse with the once poor and deformed cripple, from my hopes of enjoying the communion of saints in that pure and blissful region the Bible has taught me to look

for; and into which, from my advanced age, I humbly trust I shall, ere long, enter, by the same way he entered, even Jesus Christ.

This memoir furnishes, in addition to the weight of argument already brought forward, an incontestable answer to the delirious ravings of those cold-hearted men, who, roused from their iron slumbers by the exertions of the Bible Society, awake in horror, and exclaim against it, as employing an insufficient engine to enlighten and renovate the moral world, by giving to the ignorant and vicious THE BIBLE ALONE.

Let this poor cripple, healed of his mental maladies by the Holy Spirit, without any external means of instruction but the Bible alone—who did not recollect having ever read any other book in his life, except as mentioned in the narrative, and who had never heard a sermon, nor entered a place of worship—stand forth, like the blind man that had been restored to sight by the Lord Jesus, and say of this book, as he did of the Saviour it reveals, "If this Bible were not of God, it could do nothing; since the world began, it hath not been known that any man opened the eyes of one who was born blind."

It is possible that some persons, whose views of Scripture truths may not exactly coincide with those of the poor man, will be ready to object to his application of some of the texts quoted by him, as being introduced in a way which argued a strong bias in his mind in favor of what is called the evangelical mode of understanding the Scripture doctrines. Should such a case occur, will the objectors permit me to suggest, in reply, that, as a faithful narrator of facts, I durst not venture to alter his words, but have related them exactly as he spake them, and therefore I am not accountable for his sentiments; but I frankly acknowledge they are fully agreeable to my own views of divine truth.

It may probably appear to some critical reader that his language, in a few instances, is superior to what might have been expected from a person of his very limited information, and from hence he may be led to form the conclusion that the story is indebted to the narrator, and consequently the argument in favor of

the poor man's being taught solely by the Bible may appear in some measure to be weakened.

I shall content myself, in reply, with simply asserting that the words, the *very* words which are ascribed to him, are entirely his own, and are copied verbatim from the minutes I took on my return; that I felt surprise when I heard them spoken by him, and that I can account for the sensible and lucid manner in which he uttered them, only from the sentiment of Solomon: "The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips."

T. BINGHAM.

MEMOIR.

THE most interesting and useful memoirs with which we are furnished by the pen of biography, are not always those of the most distinguished public characters. The purple tints of the violet are not less pleasing, nor is its delicate odor less fragrant, when we accidentally discover it in a sequestered vale, than when it assists, amidst a multitude of different flowers, in ornamenting the garden: on the contrary, it affords our senses a superior gratification when unexpectedly discovered, and engrosses our attention more completely when mingled with no rival beauties, nor merely contributing a partial share of sweetness to the variegated perfumes of the parterre.

Thus, genuine lowliness, faith unfeigned, piety undissembled, pure evangelical religion, advanced to high degrees of eminence—when they appear in a character to the formation of which a variety of concurring circumstances have contributed—will interest the mind of every real Christian; but when unexpectedly discovered in a soil, to the fertility of which neither the possession of brilliant talent, the advantages of early tuition, continual cultivation, nor extensive

information received from reading the works of the learned, and conversing with the wise and good, have rendered the least assistance, the hand of the divine Former more conspicuously appears, and even the tongue of incredulity has been constrained to exclaim, with the vanquished sorcerers of Egypt, "It is the finger of God!"

I delight in retracing sensations of this kind, though a considerable period of time has passed since I beheld the scenes that awakened them in my heart; especially, since the character then forming by divine influence is now perfected in a superior region; and while I recollect, with sacred pleasure, the delightful feelings which it produced when viewed in its infant state, I earnestly anticipate the richer delight of beholding its complete glory and radiance in the blissful world above.

Some years ago, soon after I had commenced preaching an occasional lecture in the village of Overton, I was casually informed, in conversation with a person who himself made no great pretensions to a religious character, that he had accidentally conversed with a poor deformed cripple, living in a wretched cot in the neighborhood of that place, whose name was William Churchman, who had much surprised him by his fluency in talking on religious subjects; and the more so, because the man did not appear to have read any book but the Bible, nor to have attended any public worship, nor conversed with religious people of any denomination, so that he could not possibly conceive how he could have acquired the knowledge he appeared to possess.

My curiosity was much excited by this account, and I formed an instant determination to gratify it by visiting the subject of it on the evening of the following Sabbath, when

I was engaged to preach at Overton, and which I could conveniently accomplish, as his residence was near the road by which I sometimes returned home.

It was a delightful summer evening; the sultry heat of the day had given place to the coolness of a gentle and refreshing breeze, the sun was disappearing behind the hill which was the boundary of the prospect to the west, and his mild declining beams gave a faint lustre to the woods which crowned its summit. The feathered songsters were chanting melodious vespers, and to their thrilling airs the cawing rooks, the bleating flocks, and lowing herd formed a solemn and not unpleasing bass. The flowery meadows, clad in luxuriant herbage, and studded with variegated flowers, exhaled delicious odors; my own mind, warmed and enlivened by the subject I had been endeavoring to illustrate to my rustic auditory, was in a disposition calculated to enjoy the charming scene, while I walked towards the little group of huts, one of which I had been informed was the residence of the poor man and his widowed mother.

As I approached the cottage, its exterior gave me at once an idea of the wretched poverty of the inhabitants; the thatch of the decayed roof was pervious in many places to the rain of heaven,

"And all the pelting of the pitiless storm."

The windows, of which there were two, one in each story, retained scarcely any unbroken panes of glass, and their many apertures were imperfectly stopped with straw, hay, and many-colored rags.

The shattered door stood open: on entering, I beheld, seated on a little stool, which, with a broken chair, and an

old oaken table, composed the whole furniture of the miserable hovel, an object whose *external* appearance was expressive of greater wretchedness than even that of the habitation itself; and in spite of the favorable idea I had conceived of him before, excited in my frame a shuddering of mingled pity and horror.

His countenance appeared to be that of a man about thirty years old, pale and squalid; his head, of an immoderate size, formed a shocking contrast to his withered limbs, which were not larger than those of a child of ten years old. He was distorted and deformed by several curvatures, both in the legs and spine; a sad consequence of neglect suffered in his infancy, from the carelessness and brutality of an ignorant and drunken mother.

He was reading when I went in. Pursuant to a design I had formed, of knowing his sentiments and character from himself, without discovering my own, I accosted him with a very careless and indifferent air: "William, how do you do? What book is that you are reading?" He raised his head to look at me, and replied, with a look and tone of seriousness and affection, which instantly removed all those unpleasant sensations his appearance had excited in my mind, "The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

"Ha!" said I, "I have heard your religious people say, that a great deal of good may be got from that book: perhaps you can tell me if it is so; for I am sure I am bad enough, and if it will make me better, I'll read it too." He replied, very gravely, "If the same Spirit who moved holy men of old to write it, open your heart to understand it, then it will do you good; but not else, for the natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God, for

they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

"But," rejoined I, still affecting ignorance of his meaning, "how, then, came you to understand them? surely, you cannot be a learned man?"

Eying me with a solemn and piercing attention, he returned, "Sir, I don't know you, nor do I know why you came in here; but this I know, that I am commanded by this book to be ready to give to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in me; and I pray God that I may be enabled of him to do it with meekness and fear. You see, sir, what a cripple I am, but you do not know what a sinner I am!"

"You a sinner!" exclaimed I, "how can that be? you are not able to get about to drink, game, dance, and carouse, as the rest of us can; how, then, is it possible that you should be a sinner?"

"True," said he, "I could not; but yet I am one of the very vilest of sinners, for I believe no son of Adam ever sinned in the way I have done; for I thought, because God Almighty had made me such a poor lame cripple, and punished me so much, I supposed for nothing, that therefore I might take the liberty to sin without fear: I thought that he would never be so hard as to punish me here and hereafter too; so, because that was the sin I could most easily indulge, I delighted to curse and swear; and I am sure I made such new oaths and curses, that even if you have been used to swear yourself, they were so very dreadful that they would make you tremble to hear them.

"However, blessed be God, about three years ago, as I was walking on my crutches in a fine sunshiny day, near the door, I was seized all at once with a violent pain in my

stomach; I cried out, and fell down, and I really thought I was going to die presently. At first, I did not seem to have any fear of death, for the reason I told you before; but as I continued in violent pain, a thought came across my mind, What good work have I done in my life? Alas, none! Then I shall not go to heaven now; and if not, why I must go to hell at last. Now I was miserable indeed, for I did not know any other way to heaven than by my own works."

"Dear me," interrupted I, "what other way can there be than doing all the good we can, in order to gain the favor of God Almighty?"

He answered me, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified, for by the law is the knowledge of sin: not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

"But," continued he, "in this distress I tried to pray; but of all the prayers you ever read in your life, if ever you read any, or all that you ever heard, if you ever heard any body pray, I believe you never heard any thing like it; I don't think it was the prayer of faith, and yet I believe that God heard and answered it. I do not know why, but it was as it pleased him. This was it, as near as I can remember:

"'Lord, I am a poor sinner that never did any good in my life, and now I am afraid I must die and go to hell; but, O Lord, if thou canst save me, pray do; though I don't know how it can be. O try me once more, and I will be better than David; for he prayed seven times a

day, but I will pray eight times, and read twelve chapters.' But by praying, I only meant reading eight collects out of my mother's Prayer-Book."

"Well," interrupted I again, "what can be better praying than reading those excellent collects?"

"Ah, sir!" said he, very earnestly, "you might read all the prayers over that ever were made by man; you might make very good prayers for yourself, or you might make prayers for other people, which they might pray in reading, and God might hear them, and yet never pray yourself in your life."

"Well," said I, "this is very strange; what is praying, then?"

He replied, "Praying is telling the great God what we *feel* that we want of him."

Returning to his narrative, he proceeded thus: "It pleased God that I soon got somewhat better, and I set about my task, as I had promised; but alas! in a little time I found that I *did not* pray. I could not believe that I could not love God, that I could not repent of sin; and at last I left off reading my prayers, because I was afraid of mocking God any longer; but, blessed be his name, he did not suffer me to leave off reading the Testament, though the more I read the worse I was; for I read it all through, and all seemed to condemn me. Now I can see in it exceeding great and precious promises, but I could not see any of them then; I could only attend to such awful words as these:

"'Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?'

"'Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.'

"'The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.'

"'Thou, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.'

"'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.'

"'The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel.'

"Yet I began to read it over again, and when I came the second time to the blessed first chapter of the first epistle of John, and read these precious words, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin,' I felt that precious blood relieve my wounded conscience, and I seemed to myself as if I was in a new world. I could *now* repent, I could believe, I could love God, and if I had a thousand lives I could have laid them all down for Christ."

"These are very wonderful things," said I, "that you tell me; but what was the reason why God showed them to you? Was it because you were so zealous and so earnest in reading the Testament?"

He returned, with inexpressible energy, "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

"What!" exclaimed I, "can you possibly make me believe that the great God ever thought any thing about such a poor, insignificant, crippled man as you are, before he made the world?"

"Yes," said he; "else why is it said, 'Chosen in him,

before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love?'"

"Surely," said I, "you have never sinned since that time."

He replied, "In many things we offend all. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

"But," said I, "if you should sin so much as to go to hell after all this, you had better have remained as ignorant as I am."

"Being confident," he replied, "that He who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

"'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.'

"'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.'

"'Who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree.'"

"Do I understand you rightly," asked I, "that it does not signify what sins you commit, or how you live, now he is become your Saviour?"

He replied, with a look and accent of animated and holy indignation, "God forbid! how shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein? for the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not any longer live unto themselves, but

to him that died for them and rose again." Glancing his eye on my face, while he was thus speaking, he discerned a rising tear, which I could no longer suppress, and instantly cried out, "I am sure, sir, you are not what you seem; I adjure you, tell me what you are, and why you came to see me?"

"My dear Christian brother," said I, "it is true, as you say, I am not what I seem; I am a poor sinner, who, like you, have been led by the Holy Spirit to trust in that Jesus who died for the ungodly."

After a short pause, in which he seemed revolving somewhat in his mind, he said, "I have heard one of the neighbors say that there is a strange kind of man who comes sometimes to preach at David Truman's house, and that folks call him a metridate"—meaning a methodist—"or some such name; are not you the man?"

"Yes, my dear friend," said I, "I am the man. I have just been telling your poor neighbors that 'the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.'"

Never shall I forget his look or his action; rising hastily from his seat, and grasping one of my hands in both of his, he instantly dropped on his knees, and lifting up his eyes, beaming with ecstasy, he cried aloud,

"O my God, I thank thee; thou hast not only answered, but exceeded my request; I prayed that I might see and converse with one of thy people before I died, and lo, thou hast sent me one of the ministers of Jesus.

"And now, my dear sir," to me, "you must tell me what you said to the people upon that sweet verse, for I never heard a Gospel sermon in my life."

I complied, and for one time only, enjoyed a pleasure

unequalled in the twenty-six years of my ministry, but which I should rejoice to witness in a numerous assembly: the unspeakable delight of beholding my whole audience dissolved in sacred pleasure, and feasting with more than epicurean eagerness on the divine word.

When I had closed, "You know not," said he, "how you came to be inclined to preach at Overton, but I can tell you: ever since I have been new-born, I have daily prayed to my heavenly Father, that if there was any minister of Christ in England, which I thought there must be somewhere, because the BIBLE was here, he would send one to teach my poor blind neighbors, and he has sent you; and, therefore, viewing you as sent in answer to prayer, I doubt not but God will make you useful to them."

After some further conversation, I commended him to God in prayer, and we parted.

During these interesting scenes, time glided unperceived by either of us: it was now late; the moon was absent, but thousands of the distant lamps of heaven studded the sable robe of night, and afforded a glimmering light, better suited to the solemn and delightful feelings of my soul than the bright glare of day. The profound silence was interrupted by

"No noise but water, ever friend to thought,"

except the sadly pleasing strains of the nightingale, for the rest of the aerial choir were sunk in sleep, and even the grasshopper had forgotten his chirping.

As I pursued my solitary walk homewards, I felt my mind expand, my views of the excellence of the Bible were heightened and extended.

Precious volume! exclaimed I; how comparatively mean

and insignificant is all knowledge, except that which thy inestimable leaves display!

> "Here the fair Tree of Knowledge grows,
> Nor danger dwells therein."

O! that every eye which beholds "the sun when he shineth, or the moon walking in brightness," or gazes on yonder gems of the night, which declare the glory of their Maker, was blest with the superior radiance of this divine luminary—that every man in every clime possessed, and duly prized, the invaluable treasure of a BIBLE!

But the blind are insensible of the cheering ray of light. O, Spirit divine, who, with influence irresistible, accompaniedst the mandate, "Let there be light,"

> "Knock with the hammer of thy word,
> And break into each heart."

And while reflecting on the sovereignty of the divine Spirit, in his making this poor, despised, obscure being wise unto salvation, by means of the Bible alone, I humbly trust I felt glowing in my heart somewhat of the sentiment of my dearest Lord and Master, when he said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

The communication which I made of these very interesting particulars to my friends on my return, induced several Christians, of different denominations, repeatedly to visit him with me, whose surprise and pleasure were equal to my own.

A plan was laid, by a few benevolent friends, to render his outward circumstances more comfortable, though I must

do him the justice to say, he was very averse to it. "I can live," said he, "on the parish allowance," which was only two shillings per week! "and perhaps some of God's children, who have families, are in much greater want than I."

But God's ways are not as our ways! This jewel was to lie no longer in the dunghill; this radiant star was no longer to be enveloped in the mist and clouds of this gloomy atmosphere; it was destined to adorn a brighter region. We just caught a transient glance of the sparkling radiance of the descending luminary, which was now to set on the earth, that it might rise to set no more, in the world of eternal glory.

One evening, soon after, he was sitting with his mother, and reading the Bible to her, apparently in as good health as ever he had enjoyed, when he on a sudden cried out, "Mother, I am taken very ill; help me up the ladder"—the only staircase they had—"to bed; and then I shall have but one more step to ascend, and I shall be in my Father's house."

She assisted him to bed, and went to the next house to procure some gin, her only supposed remedy for every disease! and to call her neighbor to her assistance; but when she returned he was speechless; and, in a few minutes, without a struggle or a sigh, entered into the joy of his Lord.

I give no comments; I make no remarks: I leave this narrative to the blessing of God, and the reflection of the reader.

THE NEW BIRTH.

Awak'd by Sinai's awful sound,
My soul in guilt and thrall I found,
Expos'd to endless woe;
Eternal truth did loud proclaim,
"The sinner must be born again,"
Or else to ruin go.

Amaz'd I stood, but could not tell
Which way to shun the gates of hell;
For death and hell drew near:
I strove indeed, but strove in vain;
"The sinner must be born again!"
Still sounded in my ear.

When to the law I trembling fled,
It pour'd its curses on my head;
I no relief could find.
This dreadful truth renew'd my pain,
"The sinner must be born again,"
And whelm'd my tortur'd mind.

Again did Sinai's thunders roll,
And guilt lay heavy on my soul,
A vast oppressive load:
Alas! I read and saw it plain,
"The sinner must be born again,"
Or feel the wrath of God.

The saints I heard with rapture tell
How Jesus conquer'd death and hell,
And broke the fowler's snare;
Yet, when I found this truth remain,
"The sinner must be born again,"
I sunk in deep despair.

But while I thus in anguish lay,
The gracious Saviour pass'd this way,
And felt his pity move:
The sinner, by his justice slain,
Now, by his grace, is born again,
And sings Redeeming love.

OCKUM.

No. 151.

AN

IMPORTANT DISCOVERY:

OR,

"TEMPER IS EVERY THING."

Taking a walk the other day, I met an aged woman, who inquired very particularly after her brother who lived at a distance, and whom I had lately seen. I told her that he was well when I saw him, and that Providence had been kind to him, in giving him a suitable wife. "Very well," said the old lady, "I am happy to hear that; for he suffered a great deal by his first wife." "Why," said I with a degree of surprise, "I have always heard that she was a pious woman, and I never heard any thing objected against her, excepting her temper!" "*Temper!*" replied she; "well, Mr. ——, *temper is every thing.*" I was so much struck with the expression, and the manner in which it was uttered, that I could not help reflecting upon it after I had parted from her.

Returning home, I called at the house of an acquaintance, and found the husband and wife engaged in a trifling dispute. It was their fault to have acquired such a habit of contradicting each other, that they seemed to take a pleasure in it; and the children had caught so much of the spirit of their parents, that you seldom heard them open their mouths but in an angry tone. On this occasion, the wife still continued to maintain her ground, and the husband, in a fit of ill-nature, left the room. A few minutes afterwards, a boy about nine years of age quarrelled with his sister, who appeared to be about eleven, and gave her a violent blow. The mother began to bluster, and the boy

put on so surly a countenance, and assumed such an air of defiance, as plainly indicated that he had no apprehension that his mother's threats would be carried into execution. By this time I was glad to get away, and took leave, saying to myself, "Well, I see that temper is every thing."

A short time after this, I drank tea in a family where I expected to spend an agreeable evening; but I was greatly disappointed, owing to the following circumstance. The wife had received an intimation, some way or other, that her husband had given away more money to a charitable institution than she thought he should do; and there was no pleasing her. She continued scolding her husband, and telling him that he would give away all that he had; that he would reduce her and her family to beggary; and a great many things of the same kind. The husband bore it with patience, and I made my visit as short as possible. Coming away from this scene, I could not help repeating to myself, "Well, I see that temper is every thing."

A few weeks after, a friend of mine told me that he was going to introduce me to a good young man, who was very much tried with a bad wife, and he hoped I would say something to support him under his trial. He added, that his friend's wife treated him in such a haughty and unreasonable manner, that, had it not been for the consolations of the Gospel, he believed that before now his friend must have died of a broken heart. "It is a pity," said I, "that he did not know her temper before marriage." "He was not altogether ignorant of it," replied my friend; "but she had many other things." "Poor man!" said I, "then it seems he has found, by experience, that many other things are nothing, and that 'temper is every thing.'"

I was lately called in to assist in settling a difference that had taken place between some persons, and which might have been easily done, had either of the parties yielded to the other; but I could not prevail on any one of them to

give way in the least, and I left them more than ever convinced that "temper is every thing."

A friend of mine, who is connected with the town of A——, and who has a vote in the election of the ———, told me, a few days ago, that one of the candidates for that office had formerly used him in a very ungentlemanlike manner; but, finding that his election was doubtful, he came to him, and apologized for his former conduct, and solicited his vote. After hearing his apology and his request, my friend replied, "Sir, had you not called on me upon this occasion, I was determined to support you in your election, to convince you that the religion which I profess possesses a better spirit than yours." This, said I, my friend, was noble, and I am glad to find that you have learned that important lesson, that "temper is every thing."

Calling, one day, upon a poor man, who appeared to be serious, I asked him what were the means by which he was brought to the knowledge of the truth? After pausing a little, while the tears ran down his cheeks, he told me that his wife was brought to the knowledge of the truth before him; that he treated her very ill because of her religion; and that it was her amiable and engaging conduct under his ill-treatment of her, that was the first means of lodging conviction in his mind. "Well," said I, "temper is every thing."

I happened to dine one day at the house of a valuable friend, who had a numerous family. After dinner, the husband conducted us into the drawing-room, to entertain us with some valuable pictures. While we were examining and admiring one of them, his wife said to him, "My dear, that is mine." "Yes," said he, "my dear, all mine are thine!" This delicate and unexpected return from the husband was received with such a graceful and approving smile by his amiable wife, as diffused pleasure over the whole room, and excited in every heart the highest ideas

of domestic felicity. During my visit to this lovely family, nothing was to be seen or heard but what was very pleasing, as all of them spoke kindly and tenderly to each other. What added greatly to my pleasure was, that every expression seemed to flow from the heart, and the children were the living copies of their parents. "Like parents, like children," as it respects harmony and mutual affection, is a maxim which, with very few exceptions, will be found to hold good; and I have seldom found those children wanting in their affection, one to another, of whose education proper care had been taken, and who were accustomed to see examples of mutual tenderness and affection in their parents. Leaving this happy family, and returning home, I could not help comparing the pleasure I had experienced on this visit, with the pain I had felt on some of the occasions which I before mentioned, and repeating aloud, as I walked along, "Temper is every thing."

The greater part of our happiness and misery, in this vale of tears, appears to me to be referable to temper. When I see a man envious, angry, ambitious, revengeful, or stung with disappointment, uneasy himself, or the cause of uneasiness to others, I still say, that "temper is every thing."

From the conduct of most persons, one would be tempted to entertain a different opinion, and to think that temper was scarcely any thing. Yea, I met with a person the other day, to whom I had occasion to repeat my favorite maxim, who insisted, with a great deal of ill-nature, that "temper is nothing." I was not to be borne down by mere assertion, and I told him that he himself was an illustration of what I had asserted; for he was always unhappy himself, and he made every one around him unhappy. When I hear people speak against temper, I always inquire whether they have not themselves a bad temper; and when I find this to be the case, as I generally do, I allow their testimony to have no weight, because I consider that a person

who is found to be a party, is not allowed to pass judgment in his own cause. This austere acquaintance professes to be very orthodox in his opinions; and he referred me to the Scriptures in proof of what he had said. As my favorite maxim had not yet been tried by the touchstone of truth, I began to be a little startled for its safety; but I took up the Bible, and was happy to find the following passages, which I read to him: "He that regardeth reproof, shall be honored." Prov. 13 : 18. "Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings." 1 Pet. 2 : 1. "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then *peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated*, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, of them that make peace." James 3 : 15–18. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; as I have told you in time past, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;* against which there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." Gal. 5 : 19–24. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death." 1 John, 3 : 14. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could

remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." 1 Cor. 13 : 1, 2. To mention no more, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit; and if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

My opponent was now silent; and I not only considered myself as having gained a complete victory, but as having made a great discovery also. Now, said I to myself, many professors of religion do not seem to know that these passages are in the Bible. I shall make known my discovery to all whom I happen to meet, and, from its nature, it cannot fail to obtain a favorable reception. I shall tell them, said I, that Jesus was meek and lowly in heart, that he railed not, he threatened not; and that if they know the power of his cross, they will subdue their evil temper; that the correction of the temper is of great importance to their own happiness, and to the happiness of their families and connections; that the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is of great price in the sight of God; and that they can have no evidence that they are the children of God without it. But how much was I disappointed, when some to whom I made known my discovery told me, with a great deal of coldness and indifference, that they knew all that before; others said it was cold and legal, and they wanted another kind of doctrine; while others remarked, that I had a good natural temper myself, which was the reason I talked so much about it; *but that I ought to remember* that nature is not grace. Of this I was reminded very frequently. I told them, however, that if a good temper was the mere offspring of nature, it was not for that reason to be undervalued; that God was naturally good, and that angels were naturally pure; but that we were not on that account to despise the goodness of the one, nor the purity of the other. But all that I said was to no purpose; they still persevered in justifying themselves, and represented as nothing what I considered as "every thing."

Let not the temper which is here enjoined, be mistaken. It is a compound of firmness and complacency, of peace and love; it manifests itself in acts of kindness and courtesy: a kindness not pretended, but genuine; a courtesy not false and superficial, but cordial and sincere. The person who has such a temper, will be unshaken in constancy, unwearied in benevolence, firm without roughness, and attentive without servility. A disposition like this, however, belongs not to any one by nature, and it becomes every reader to reflect, whether *he* is now possessed of it, in a degree at least; or, if not, how it is to be produced in him.

In regard to the subject of temper, as well as every other mark of genuine Christianity, we ought constantly to recollect the injunction of our blessed Lord, "Make the tree good," as the necessary means of obtaining good fruit; for the mistake of many in religion appears to be, that they do not begin with the beginning. They do not lay their foundation in the persuasion, that man is, by nature, in a state of alienation from God. They consider him rather as an imperfect, than as a fallen creature. They allow that he requires to be improved, but deny that he requires to be renewed, or, as the Scriptures emphatically say, "born again." It is well if these persons are not finally and fatally deceived, by considering the gentle and pacific temper which is owing to constitution, as making up for the want of Christian principle. We must carefully avoid adopting the external display of an amiable temper, as a substitute for piety; and carefully observe, that without repentance towards God, and faith in his dear Son, it is impossible to please God.

Mistakes on this subject, however, are, alas! not confined to one class, or character. The cause of real religion suffers inconceivably in the eye of the world, by the bad humor of many of its professors. Yes; persons are to be found among us, who, while they profess Christianity, pay

little regard to their temper and disposition. They approve Christianity as a theory, rather than as a principle which should maintain a sovereign influence over the spirit of their mind. They do not sufficiently consider, that *gentleness, peace,* and *meekness,* are the "fruit of the Spirit," nor that "courtesy," and "whatsoever things are lovely," are enjoined upon them by divine authority. The possession of these essential ornaments of the Christian faith, they ascribe to natural disposition; and, alas! so far from lamenting the indulgence or display of an unchristian temper in themselves, they treat the subject as though it were unconnected with that faith which saves the soul. The Holy Scriptures uniformly represent divine truth as the seed in the believer of every holy disposition; the graft through which the tree is made good, and its fruit good, and the mould into which the soul is cast, and from which it receives its form and impression, as the metal is fashioned by the skill of the artist. Thus, we are not only justified, but sanctified by faith.

Though some treat this subject as matter of inferior moment, perhaps my reader is of a different mind. He may plead guilty. Nay, he often confesses the inequality of his temper, and, before God in secret, he says he laments it. But does he also implore the Spirit, that he may mortify the deeds of the body? Are the fruits of the Spirit earnestly sought for in Christ's name, and watchfully reared with unremitted prayer for divine grace; or are you declining in religion? No wonder, then, you complain. How can you be otherwise than unhappy? How can you thus ever adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour? Oh remember, that Christianity enjoins the same temper, the same spirit, the same dispositions on all its real professors; so that if *any* man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his!

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THE

SIN AND DANGER

OF

NEGLECTING THE SAVIOUR.

BY REV JOHN OWEN, D.D

This little book comes to you with the most friendly intention, and addresses you upon a subject which involves in it every thing that is dear to you in time and eternity.

I. Ask yourself whether you *have well considered* your present state with respect to God and eternity. This Moses wishes for the Israelites: "Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" It is the greatest folly to leave the issues of these things to an uncertain hazard. And that man who cannot prevail with himself strictly to examine what is his state

with respect to eternity, never does any good, nor abstains from any evil, in a due manner. Remember, therefore, that "many are called, but few chosen." To be called, is to enjoy all the outward privileges of the Gospel; yet this you may do, and not be chosen. Even among those to whom the word is preached, they are few that shall be saved. In the distribution made by our Lord of the hearers of the word into four sorts of ground, it was but one of them that received real benefit thereby. Many herein deceive themselves, until they fall under woful surprisals. And this is represented in the account of the sinner's doom; for the generality of those who have professed the Gospel, are introduced as complaining of their disappointment: "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Afterwards came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered, and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not."

II. Take heed of being deluded by *common presumptions.* Most men have some thoughts, in general, about what their state is, and what it will be in the issue, but they make no diligent search into this matter, because a number of common presumptions immediately insinuate themselves into their minds for their relief—such, perhaps, as these: that they are Christians; that they are in the right way of religion; that they are partakers of the outward privileges of the Gospel, hearing the word, and participating of the ordinances; that they have light and convictions, so that they abstain from sin, and perform duties as others do not, and the like. All those who are behind them in these things, they judge to be in a dangerous condition, whence they entertain good hopes concerning

themselves; and this is all that most trust to. I shall not discourse on the vanity of presumptions; it hath been done by many: I give only this warning in general to those who desire to be made partakers of Christ, that they put no trust in them; for, if they do so, they will eternally deceive their souls. This was a great part of the preparatory ministry of John the Baptist: "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our Father." This was their great comprehensive privilege, containing all the outward church and covenant advantages. These they rested in, and trusted to, to their ruin: herein he designed to undeceive them.

III. Consider aright *what it is to live and die without an interest in Christ*, without a participation of him. Where this is not seated in the mind, where thoughts of it are not continually prevalent, there can be no one step taken in the way towards him. Unless we are thoroughly convinced that without him we are in a state of apostasy from God, under the curse, and obnoxious to eternal wrath, as some of the worst of God's enemies, we shall never truly flee unto him for refuge: "The whole have no need of a physician, but the sick;" Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance; and a conviction of this is the principal end of the ministry of the law. The misery of this state has been the subject of innumerable discourses; but few think themselves concerned in it. Let us tell men of it a thousand times, yet they either take no notice of it, or believe it not, nor look on it as that which belongs to the way and course of preaching wherein they are concerned. These things, it seems, preachers must say, and they may believe them who please. It is a rare thing that any one will so much as say unto himself, "Is it so with

me ?" And if we now, together with this caution, tell the same men again, that, while they are uninterested in Christ, not ingrafted into him by faith, they run in vain; that all their labor in religion is lost, that their duties are all neglected, that they are under the displeasure and curse of God, that their end is eternal destruction, which things are unquestionably certain, yet will they let them all pass by, without any further consideration.

But here I must fix with them to whom I speak at present: unless there be in them a full conviction of the woful, deplorable condition of every person, of whatever quality, profession, religion, or outward state he be, who is not yet made partaker of Christ, all that I have farther to add will be of no use. Remember, then, that the due consideration hereof is, to you, in your state, your chief concern in this world, and be not afraid to take in a full and deep sense of it; for, if you are really delivered from it, and have good evidence thereof, it is nothing unto you but matter of eternal praise and thanksgiving. And if you are not so, it is highly necessary that your mind should be possessed with due apprehensions of it. The work of this conviction is the first effect of true religion; and the great abuse of religion in the world is, that a pretence of it deludes the minds of men to apprehend that it is not necessary. To be of this or that religion, or of this or that way in religion, is supposed to be sufficient to secure the eternal state of men, though they are never convinced of their lost estate by nature.

IV. Consider the infinite *condescension and love of Christ*, in his invitations and calls to you to come unto him for life, deliverance, mercy, grace, peace, and eternal salvation. Multitudes of these invitations and calls are

recorded in the Scripture, and they are all of them filled with those blessed encouragements which divine wisdom knows to be suited to lost sinners in their present state. It were a blessed contemplation to dwell on the infinite condescension, grace, and love of Christ, in his invitations to sinners to come unto him, that they may be saved; on that mixture of wisdom and persuasive grace that is in them; on the force and efficacy of the pleading and arguments by which they are accompanied, as they are recorded in Scripture; but that belongs not to my present design: this only I shall say, that in the declaration and preaching of them, Jesus Christ yet stands before sinners, calling, inviting, encouraging them to come unto him.

This is the word which he now speaks unto you, "Why will ye die? Why will ye perish? Why will ye not have compassion on your own souls? Can your hearts endure, or can your hands be strong, in the day of wrath that is approaching? It is but a little while before all your hopes, your reliefs, and presumptions will forsake you, and leave you eternally miserable; look unto me, and be saved; come unto me, and I will ease you of your sins, sorrows, tears, and burdens, and give rest unto your souls: come, I entreat you, delay no longer; put me off no more, eternity lies at the door; cast out all reserves, do not so hate me, as that ye will rather perish than accept of deliverance by me."

These and the like things doth the Lord Christ continually declare, proclaim, plead, and urge on the souls of sinners, as it is fully declared, Prov. 1: 22–27: "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity; and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I

have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you." He calls you in the preaching of the word, as if he were present with you, stood among you, and spake personally to every one of you; and because this would not suit his present state of glory, he hath appointed the ministers of the Gospel to appear before you, and to deal with you in his stead, avowing, as his own, the invitations that are given you in his name, "To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

Consider, therefore, his infinite condescension, grace, and love. Why all this towards you? Doth he stand in need of you? Have you deserved it at his hands? Did you love him first? Cannot he be happy and blessed without you? Hath he any design upon you, that he is so earnest in calling you to him? Surely not. It is nothing but the overflowing of mercy, compassion, and grace, that moves him herein. Here lies the entrance of innumerable souls into a death and condemnation far more severe than those contained in the curse of the law; "For," says the apostle, "we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life." 2 Cor. 2 : 15, 16. In the contempt

of this infinite condescension of Christ in his invitation of sinners to himself, lie the sting and poison of unbelief, which unavoidably gives over the souls of men unto eternal ruin: and whom will they have to blame but themselves for their miserable doom? Yea; but,

V. Perhaps if you should, on his invitation, begin to look on him and resolve to come to him, you are greatly afraid that, when it comes to the trial, he will not receive you; for no heart can conceive, no tongue can express, what a wretched, vile, and provoking sinner you have been: that the Lord Christ will receive unto him such as you are, you have no hope, or that ever you shall find acceptance with him. It is well, when persons come so far as to be sensible of what discouragements they have to encounter, what difficulties lie in their way, and what obstacles rise against them; for the most do perish in a senseless stupidity: they will not consider how it is with them, what is required of them, nor how it will be in the latter end; they doubt not but that either they do believe already, or can do so when they please. But when they come so far as to charge the failure of their acceptance with Christ on their own unworthiness, and so are discouraged from coming unto him, there are arguments for their conviction and persuasion, which nothing but the devil and unbelief can defeat: wherefore, that which is now proposed to consideration in answer to this, is *the readiness of Christ to receive every sinner*, be he who or what he will, that shall come unto him; and we have the highest evidences that Divine wisdom and grace can give unto us. This is the language of the Gospel: of all that the Lord Christ did or suffered, which is recorded therein. This is the Divine testimony of the Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word,

and the Holy Ghost; and of the Three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood, all give their joint testimony, that the Lord Christ is ready to forgive all sinners who come to him; they who receive not this testimony make God a liar. Whatever the Lord Christ is, in the constitution of his person, in the representation of the Father, in his office, in what he did on earth, in what he doeth in heaven, proclaims the same truth. Nothing but obstinacy in sin and unbelief can suggest a thought to our minds, that He is not willing to receive us when we come unto him. Herein we are to bear testimony against the unbelief of all unto whom the Gospel is preached, that come not unto him. Unbelief includes a contempt of the wisdom of God, a denial of his truth or faithfulness, an impeachment of the sincerity of Christ in his invitations, making him a deceiver; and it will issue in an express hatred of his person and office, and of the wisdom of God in him. Here, then, you are shut up, you cannot from hence take any countenance unto your unbelief.

VI. Consider that he is as *able* to save us, as he is ready and willing to receive us. The testimonies which he hath given us of his goodness and love are undeniable, and none dare directly call in question, or deny his power. But Christ is able to save all them, and only them, who come to God by him. Yet when it comes to the trial in particular, some are apt to think, that although they will not conclude that Christ cannot save them, yet they do, on various accounts, say that they cannot be saved by him. This, therefore, we also give testimony unto, in our exhortation to come unto him: namely, that his power to save those that shall comply with his call is sovereign, uncontrolable, and almighty. All things in heaven and earth are

committed to him, all power is his, and he will use it to this end; namely, the assured salvation of all that come unto him.

VII. Consider particularly what hath been spoken of the *character of God*, and all the holy properties of his nature. Nothing can possibly give us more encouragement to come to him; for we have shown that God, who is infinitely wise and glorious, hath designed to exercise all the holy properties of his nature, his mercy, love, grace, goodness, righteousness, wisdom, and power, in Christ, in and unto the salvation of them that do believe. Whoever, therefore, comes unto Christ by faith on this representation of the glory of God in him, he ascribes and gives to God all that glory and honor which he aimeth at from his creatures; and we can do nothing wherewith he is pleased equal unto it. Every poor sinner, that comes by faith unto Christ, gives to God all that glory which it is his design to manifest and be exalted in; and what can we do more? There is more glory given to God by coming unto Christ in believing, than in keeping the whole law; inasmuch as he hath more eminently manifested the holy properties of his nature in the way of salvation by Christ, than in giving the law: there is therefore no man who, under Gospel invitations, refuseth to come unto Christ by believing, but secretly, through the power of darkness, blindness, and unbelief, hates God, dislikes all his ways, would not have his glory exalted, nor manifested, choosing rather to die in enmity against him, than to give glory to him. Do not deceive yourselves: it is not an indifferent thing whether you will come to Christ upon his invitation or no; a thing that you may put off from one season unto another; your present refusal of it is a high act of enmity against God.

VIII. Consider that, by coming unto Christ, you shall have *an interest in all that glory* which we have proposed to you; for Christ will become yours, for ever yours, and so all his glory is yours also. All are apt to be affected with the good things in their relatives; their grace, their riches, their beauty, their power; for they judge themselves to have an interest in them, by reason of their relation to them. Christ is nearer to believers than any natural relations are to us; they have therefore an interest in all his glory. And is this a small thing in your eyes, that Christ shall be yours, and all his glory shall be yours, and you shall have the advantage of it unto your eternal blessedness? Is it nothing to you to continue strangers to, and uninterested in, all his glory; to be left to take your portion in this world of lusts, and sins, and pleasures, and a few perishing trifles, with eternal ruin in the close, whilst such durable substance, such riches of glory, are tendered to you?

IX. Consider *the horrible ingratitude* there is in a neglect or refusal to come to Christ upon his invitation, with the eternal ruin that will ensue thereon! "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Unbelievers, under the preaching of the Gospel, are the vilest and most ungrateful of all the creation of God. The devils themselves, wicked as they are, are not guilty of this sin, for Christ is never tendered to them; they never had any offer of salvation on condition of faith and repentance.

Some, it may be, will say, "What, then, shall we do? What is it that is required of us?"

Take the advice of the apostle: "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness; but exhort one

another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." This day, even this, is unto you, in the tender of grace, the acceptable time, this is the day of salvation. Others have had their day as well as you, and have missed their opportunity; take heed, lest it should be so with you also. How, if any one should write it down, or peculiarly commit it to remembrance, "This day there was a tender of Christ, and salvation in him, made unto my soul; from this time I will resolve to give up myself unto him." Having fixed your resolution, charge your consciences with what you have engaged, and make yourselves to know, that if you go back from it, it is a token that you are going to ruin.

Consider that it is high time for you to make somewhat of religion. Do not hang always in suspense; let it not be a question with yourselves, whether you choose to be saved or no. This is as good a time and season for a resolution as ever you are like to have while in this world. Some things, nay, many things, may fall in between this and the next opportunity, that shall put you backward, and make your entrance into the kingdom of heaven far more difficult than ever it was; and the living in that uncertainty which you do, of what will become of you in eternity, is a miserable life in this world. Those who put far from them the evil day, in the pursuit of lusts and pleasures, have somewhat that gives them present satisfaction; but you have no enjoyment, neither will your latter end be better than theirs, if you die without an interest in Christ Jesus. Come, therefore, to a determinate resolution what you will do in this matter. Christ hath waited long for you, and who knows how soon he may withdraw, never to look after you any more.

I have thought it necessary to stir up your minds by this exhortation to faith in Jesus Christ, aiming to suit it to the capacity of the weakest sinner that is capable of any self-consideration as to his eternal welfare. But yet a little farther, to give efficacy to this exhortation, it will be necessary to REMOVE SOME OF THOSE COMMON AND OBVIOUS EXCUSES to which convinced sinners usually betake themselves, to put off a present compliance with the calls of Christ to come unto him; for although it is unbelief alone, acting in the darkness of men's minds, and the obstinacy of their wills, that effectually keeps sinners from coming unto Christ upon his call; yet it shrouds itself under various pretences, that it may not appear in its own ugly form; for no sin, whereof men can be guilty in this world, is of so horrible a nature, and so dreadful an aspect, as this unbelief, where a clear view of it is obtained in evangelical light; wherefore, by the aid of Satan, it suggests other pleas and pretences unto the minds of sinners, under which they may countenance themselves in a refusal to come to Christ: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Any thing else it may be, but not unbelief: that they all disavow. I shall, therefore, notice a few of those excuses which are obvious, and which are exemplified in the Gospel itself.

Some say, on such exhortations, "*What is it* that you would have us to do? We hear the word preached, we believe it as well as we can, we do many things, and abstain from many evils; what more is required of us?" This is the language of the hearts of most of those with whom, in this case, we have to do.

It is usual with them who do something outwardly in the ways of God, but nothing with a right state of heart, and so nothing in due manner, to expostulate against requiring of them more than they do. So the people dispute with God himself: "A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master; if, then, I be a father, where is mine honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name; and ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?" Mal. 1 : 6. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me; but ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord; yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?" Chap. 3 : 8, 13. So they in the Gospel, who esteemed themselves to have done their duty, being pressed to believe by Jesus Christ, ask him, with some indignation, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" John 6 : 28. If what we do be not enough, what is it that you require more of us? So was it with the young man, Matt. 19 : 20, "What lack I yet?" Be advised, therefore, not to be too confident of your state, lest you should yet lack that one thing, the want of which might prove your eternal ruin.

The things mentioned, with all of the like nature, may be where there is not one spark of saving faith. Simon Magus heard the Word, and we are informed that he believed. Herod heard it, and did many things gladly; and all sorts of hypocrites do, upon their conviction, perform many duties, and abstain from many sins: so that, notwithstanding this plea, you may perish forever.

Where these things are sincere, they belong unto the exercise of faith; they may be, after a sort, without faith,

but faith cannot be without them. But there is a fundamental act of faith whereby we close with Christ, whereby we receive him, that is, in order of nature antecedent unto its acting in all other duties and occasions: it is laying the foundation; other things belong to the building. This is that which you are called on to secure, and you know it by these two properties:

It is *singular*. So our Saviour tells the Jews, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." John 6 : 29. The act, work, or duty of faith in receiving Christ, is a peculiar, singular work, wherein the soul yields especial obedience unto God; it is not to be reckoned among such common duties as those before mentioned; but the soul must find out wherein it hath closed with Christ, upon the command of God.

It is accompanied with a *universal spiritual change* in the soul. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5 : 17. Wherefore, if you would not choose rather to deceive and ruin your own souls, come to the trial, whether, indeed, you have received Christ in such a singular, transforming act of faith; do not, on such pretences, refuse to comply with the word of exhortation proposed unto you.

But some may say, they *know not how to proceed* in this work. They can make nothing of it; they have tried to come to this believing, but do still fail in what they design; they go on and off, but can make no progress, can come to no satisfaction; therefore they think it best to let things go in general as they are, without putting themselves to farther trouble as to any special act of faith in the receiving of Christ. This is the language of men's hearts, though not

of their mouths; it is another shelter of unbelief, and they act accordingly; they have a secret dependency, which keeps them from attempting a real closing with Christ on the tender of the Gospel. Something may be offered to the mind thus distempered.

Remember the disciples that were fishing, who had toiled all night, but caught nothing. Upon the coming of Christ unto them, he requires that they should cast out their net once more. Peter makes some excuse, from the labor which they had taken in vain all the night; however, he would venture once more, on the command of Christ, and had an astonishing draught of fishes. Luke 5 : 9. Have you been wearied in the disappointments attending your attempts and resolutions? Yet cast in your net this once more, upon the command of Christ; venture this once more to come unto him, on his call and invitation; and, be assured, you shall not come to him in vain.

Many can give you their experience, that if they had been discouraged by present overwhelming difficulties, arising from their disappointments and relapses into folly, they had been utterly ruined, whereas now they are at rest and peace in the bosom of Christ. On a great surprisal, Christ lost at once many disciples, and they lost their souls. "They went back, and walked no more with him." John 6 : 66. Take heed of like discouragements.

Some may say, yea, practically they do say, that these things indeed are necessary: they must come to Christ by believing, or they are undone; but *this is not the season* for it; there will be time enough to apply themselves to it when other occasions are past; at present they have no leisure to enter upon and go through with this duty, wherefore they will abide in their present state for a while, hearing and

doing many things, and, when time serves, will apply themselves unto this duty also.

This is an evidence of the sottishness and folly which are come upon our nature by sin; a deprivation that the apostle places in the evils of corrupted nature: "For we ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures." Tit. 3: 3. Can any thing be more foolish, sottish, and stupid, than for men to put off the consideration of the eternal concerns of their souls for one hour, being altogether uncertain whether they shall live another or not? to prefer present trifles before a regard to the blessedness or misery of an immortal estate? For those who never heard of these things, who never had any conviction of sin and judgment, to put the evil day far from them, is not much to be wondered at; but for you, who have Christ preached unto you, who own a necessity of coming unto him, to put it off from day to day, upon such slight pretences, it is astonishing folly. May you not be spoken unto in the language of the wisdom of God, "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?" Prov. 6: 9. You come to hear the word, and when you go away, the language of your heart is, "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep." We will abide a little while in our present state, and afterwards we will rouse up ourselves. Under this deceit do multitudes perish every day. This is a dark shade wherein cursed unbelief lies hid.

Consider that *delay* is the greatest engine that Satan makes use of in the world, among them that hear the word preached, for the ruin of their souls. He hath other arts, and ways, and methods of dealing with other men, as by sensual and worldly lusts; but as to them who through

their convictions attend to the preaching of the word, this is his great and almost only engine for their ruin: "There needs," say they, "no haste in this matter, another time will be more seasonable; you may be sure not to fail of it before you die: this present day, however, is most unfit for it; you have other things to do; you may come again to hear the word the next opportunity." Know, assuredly, if your minds are influenced to delay coming to Christ by such insinuations, you are under the power of Satan, and he is like to hold you fast unto destruction.

This is as evil and dangerous a posture, or frame of mind, as you can well fall into. If you have learned to put off God, and Christ, and the word, for the present season; and yet relieve yourselves in this, that you do not intend, like others, always to reject them, but will have a time to hearken to their call; you are secured and fortified against all convictions, and persuasions, and fears.

Remember, then, that the Scripture confines you to the present day, without the least intimation that you shall have either another day, or another tender of grace and mercy in any day. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear his voice. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." "Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness, springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." Take care lest you come short of the grace of God. Redeem the time, or you are lost for ever.

As to the pretence of your occasions and business, there is a ready way to disappoint the craft of Satan in that pretence, that is, to mix thoughts of Christ, and the renewing

of your resolutions either to come or to cleave unto him, with all your occasions; let nothing put it utterly out of your minds; make it familiar unto you, and you will beat Satan out of that strong hold: "Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman." Prov. 7 : 4. However, shake yourselves out of this dust, or destruction lies at the door.

It is the language of the heart of some, that if they give up themselves unto a compliance with this exhortation, and go seriously about this duty, they *must relinquish and renounce all their lusts and pleasures,* yea, much of their converse and society wherein they find so much present satisfaction that they know not how to part with them. If they might retain their old ways, at least some of them, it were another matter, but this total relinquishment of all is very severe.

We can here use no condescension, no compliance, with respect unto any sin or lust; we have no commission to grant that request of Lot, "Is it not a little one?" let it be spared? Nor come to Naaman's terms, "God be merciful to me in this thing, in all others I will be obedient." We must here be peremptory with you, whatever be the event; if you are discouraged by it, we cannot help it. We cannot encourage you to come to Christ, with the hope of indulgence in any one sin whatever. I speak not this, as though you could at once absolutely and perfectly leave all sin in the root and branches of it; but only you are to do it in heart and resolution, engaging in a universal mortification of all sin, as by grace from above you shall be enabled. But your choice must be absolute, without reserves, as to love, interest, and design; God or the world, Christ or Belial, holiness or sin; there are no medium, no terms of composition: "What concord hath Christ with Belial? or

what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you; and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. 6: 15–18.

It will be said by some, that they do not see that *those who profess to be believers* are so much better than themselves, that you need to press them so earnestly to so great a change; they know not why they should not be accounted believers already, as well as others. I shall in a few words, as well as I am able, lay this stumbling-block out of the way, though I confess at this day it is weighty and cumbersome. And I say,

1. Among them that profess themselves to be believers, there are many false, corrupt hypocrites; and it is no wonder that, on various occasions, they lay the stumbling-block of their iniquities before the face of others; but they shall bear their own burden.

2. It is acknowledged, and lamented, that some who have reason to be judged true believers, yet, through their unmortified pride, or covetousness, or carelessness in their conversation, or their vain attire and conformity to the world, or forwardness, do give just occasion of offence. We confess that God is displeased herewith, Christ and the Gospel dishonored, and many that are weak and wounded are discouraged. But as for you, this is not your rule; this is not proposed to you, but that word only is so, that will never fail you.

3. The world doth not know, nor is able to make a right judgment of believers: nor do you, for it is the spiritual man alone that discerneth the things of God. Their infirmities are visible to all, their graces invisible; the King's daughter is glorious within. And when you are able to make a right judgment of them, you will desire no greater advancement than to be of their society. Psalm 16 : 3.

These few instances of the pretences wherewith unbelief covers its deformity, and hides that destruction wherewith it is accompanied, may suffice to our present purpose; they are multiplied in the minds of men, impregnated by the suggestions of Satan on their darkness and folly. A little spiritual wisdom will rend the veil of them all, and expose unbelief acting in enmity against Christ under them.

No. 153.

THE

END OF TIME.

BY REV. ISAAC WATTS, D.D.

The word of prophecy assures us, that there shall come a day on which an angel shall lift up his hand to heaven, and swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that there shall "be *time no longer.*" Rev. 10 : 5, 6. However distant that awful period may be, the same language is, in effect, daily addressed to thousands of our fellow-mortals. They hear, and die. Death, as on the wing of an angel, flies from house to house, proclaiming to each inhabitant in turn, "Time with thee shall be no longer. Thou hast finished thine appointed course on earth—enter the eternal world." Before this message be delivered to us, it would be wise to ask ourselves, "Are we prepared to receive it ?"

The end of time! This includes the end of our earthly gains and enjoyments. Now, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are variously indulged. But then, the miser is forced from his gold ; the lofty are brought low ; the drunkard no longer calls for his glass ; the lewd no longer glory in their shame. And is it fit, O men, that you should fill up life with vices that degrade, or with vanities that can, at best, but amuse you ? Take heed that your souls do not live too much on any of the satisfactions of the world ; that your affections be not set upon them ; that you make them not your idols, lest you be left helpless and miserable ; for they cannot follow you into the world of souls : they are the things of time, and have no place in eternity. "The end of all things is at hand, therefore be ye sober." Be ye moderate in every enjoyment on

earth, and prepare to part with all, when the angel pronounces that "time shall be no longer." His sentence puts an end to every earthly joy, and every mortal hope.

The end of time! Then closes the season of conversion. We come into the world ignorant, and are naturally prone to sin. The image of God is lost, and life is the only space allotted for its recovery. If we die without a change, we must remain for ever unholy. Oh, what awakening inquiries does the thought suggest! Am I renewed by the Holy Spirit? What are my delights and my desires? Is my heart a temple of God, or the seat of sin? How short the term during which these inquiries are to be resolved!

The end of time! Then the means of restoring us to the enjoyment of God will be withdrawn. We live here as in a state of banishment; we cannot behold him as he is; yet he has not utterly forsaken us. He spreads a table in this desert; he proclaims himself merciful, and ready to forgive. He saith, "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." Prophets and apostles, though dead, yet speak to us. They describe a Mediator who gave himself a ransom for us; that, believing in him, "we might have life through his name." His ministers are still sent as ambassadors, beseeching us to be reconciled to God, and assuring us that with open arms he stands ready to receive us. Shall we slight their invitations, and thus pour contempt on their divine Master? The loss will soon appear to be all our own, and irrecoverable; for the sound of pardon reaches not beyond the limits of this world. Now the blessed God comes to the door of our hearts, as if to plead for admittance; he invites us to return and confess our sins, that he may forgive them. Harden not your hearts, lest when the angel lifts up his hand to announce the end of time,

> The Lord himself, in vengeance drest,
> Should lift his hand, and swear,
> "You that despised my promised rest,
> Shall have no portion there."

The end of time! Then shall the sinner's heart give up

its last hope. None are completely miserable before death. Indeed, the vilest men are often the most full of mirth. But it will not be always so; their joy will be turned into heaviness. Imagine the Judge on his throne, calling you to answer these inquiries at his bar: "What have you done with all the time of your life in yonder world? You spent there, some, twenty; some, forty; some, seventy years; and I gave you this time with a thousand opportunities and means of grace and salvation. What have you done with them all? How many Sabbaths did I afford? How many sermons have you heard? How many seasons did I give you for prayer and retirement, and converse with God and your own souls? Did you improve time well? Did you pray? Did you converse with your souls, and with God? Or did you suffer time to slide away in a thousand follies, and neglect the one thing needful?" What if your consciences should plead guilty? Who knows the keenness of that agony with which you will cry out, "Oh, wretched man that I am! God hath spoken to me by a parent, by a minister, and by his written word; I have neglected these, and ruined my soul!" Awful subject! let us muse thereon, while there is yet a hope for mercy.

Time shall end! How valuable, then, while it lasts, particularly to the unprepared! Every hour you live is a merciful respite. Go forth and meet your offended Sovereign. "Seek him while he may be found; call upon him while he is near." Go in the name of Jesus, plead his righteousness, his death, his intercession, and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

Time shall end! Oh, the strange folly and madness of those who are afraid of the end of time, whenever they think of it; and yet who know not what to do with their time, as it runs off daily and hourly! They find not their souls ready for death; and yet they live, from year to year, without any further preparation for dying; they waste their hours of leisure in mere trifling; they lose their season of grace, their means and opportunities of salvation.

O the wretched ignorance of the children of men, that are sent hither on a trial for eternity, and yet know not how to pass away time! They know not how to wear out life, and get soon enough to the end of the day. They doze their hours away, or saunter from place to place, without any design or meaning. They inquire of every one they meet, what they shall do to kill time; because they cannot spend it fast enough, they are perpetually calling in the assistance of others to laugh, or sport, or trifle with them, and to help them off with this dead weight of time; while, at the same moment, if you do but mention the end of time, they are dreadfully afraid of coming near it. What folly and distraction is this! What inconsistency is found in the heart and practice of sinful men! "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil; madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead." Eccles. 9 : 3.

O, that these loiterers would once consider that time loiters not; days and hours, months and years loiter not: each of these flies with swiftest wings, and bears them onward to eternity. If *they* delay among toys and shadows, time knows no delay; and they will one day learn, by bitter experience, what substantial, important, and eternal blessings they have lost by their criminal waste of time. The apostle Peter assures them, though they slumber and sleep in a lethargy of sin, so that you cannot awaken them, yet "their judgment lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." 2 Peter, 2 : 3. The awful moment is hastening upon them, which will teach them terribly the true value of time; then they would give all the golden pleasures, and riches, and grandeur of this world, to purchase one short day more, or one hour of time, wherein they might repent and return to God, and get within the reach of hope and salvation; but time, and salvation, and hope, are all vanished, and out of their reach for ever.

Time shall end! How rich a source of reflection to a thinking mind. Do I observe the declining day, and the setting sun sinking into darkness? So decline the days of

life, the hours of labor, and the seasons of grace. O may I finish my appointed work with honor, ere the light be fled! May I improve the shining hours of grace, ere the shadows of the evening overtake me, and my time of labor be no more!

Do I see the moon gliding along through the midnight sky? This planet also is measuring out my life, and bringing the number of my moments to an end. May I be prepared to take leave of the sun and moon, and bid adieu to these visible heavens, and all their twinkling glories! These are all but the measures of my time, and hasten me on towards eternity.

Am I walking in a garden, and do I stand to observe the slow motion of the shadow upon a dial there? It passes over the hour-lines with an imperceptible progress, yet it will touch the last line of daylight shortly: so my hours and my moments move onward with a silent pace, but they will arrive with certainty at their last limit, how heedless soever I am of their motion, and how thoughtless soever I may be of the improvement of time, or of the end of it.

Does a new year commence, and the first morning of it dawn upon me? Let me remember that the last year was finished, and is gone over my head, in order to make way for the present. I have one year the less to travel through this world, and to fulfil the various services of a travelling state: may my diligence in duty be doubled, since the number of my appointed years is diminished.

Do I find a new birthday in my survey of the calendar, the day wherein I entered upon the stage of mortality, and was born into this world of sins, frailties, and sorrows, in order to my probation for a better state? Blessed Lord! how much have I spent already of this mortal life, this season of my probation; and how little am I prepared for that happier world; how unready for my dying moment! I am hastening hourly to the end of that life which began at my nativity. Am I born of God? Have I begun the

life of a Christian? Am I prepared for that awful day which shall terminate the number of my months on earth? Am I fit to be born into the world of spirits, through the strait gate of death? Am I renewed in all the powers of nature, and made meet to enter that unseen world, where there shall be no more of these revolutions of days and years, but where one eternal day fills up all the space with divine pleasure, or one eternal night with long and deplorable distress and darkness?

When I see a friend expiring, or the corpse of my neighbor conveyed to the grave, their months and minutes are all determined, and the seasons of their trial are finished for ever; they are gone to their eternal home, and the state of their souls is fixed unchangeably! The angel that has sworn their "time shall be no longer," has concluded their hopes or fears; and, according to the rules of righteous judgment, their misery or happiness is decided for eternity. Take this warning, O my soul, and think of thine own removal.

Are we standing in the church-yard, paying the last honor to the relics of our friends? What a number of hillocks of death appear around us! What are the tombstones but the memorials of the inhabitants of that town, to inform us of the period of all their lives, and to point out the day when it was said to each of them, *Your time shall be no longer!* O, may I readily learn this important lesson, that my turn is hastening too! Such a little hillock shall shortly arise for me on some unknown spot of ground; it shall cover this flesh and these bones of mine in darkness, and shall hide them from the light of the sun, and from the sight of man, till the heavens be no more.

Perhaps some surviving friend may engrave my name, with the number of my days, upon a plain stone, as a fresh monument of the frailty of nature and the end of time. It is possible, some friendly foot may now and then visit the place of my repose, and some tender eye bedew the cold memorial with a tear: one or another of old acquaintances

may possibly attend there, to learn the silent lectures of mortality from my grave-stone; and it may be, he will point with his finger and show his companion the month and day of my decease. O that solemn, that awful day, which shall finish my appointed time on earth, and all the labors of my hand!

Think, O my soul, that, while friends or strangers are engaged on that spot, and reading the date of thy departure hence, thou wilt be fixed under a decisive and unchangeable sentence; rejoicing in the reward of time well-improved, or suffering the endless sorrows that shall attend the abuse of it, in an unknown world of happiness or misery!

Time shall end! What a reproof is here administered! The proper business of life and the solemn duties of religion have been delayed; while we, under the pretence that there is time enough, have burdened ourselves with things needless and unprofitable.

How useful a practice would it be, to suppose ourselves often at the end of time; to imagine ourselves just under the sound of the angel's voice, or at the tribunal of Christ, and to call our souls to a solemn account in what manner we have passed our time hitherto! Give me leave to enter into particulars a little; for generalities but seldom convict the conscience, or affect the heart.

1. Have you not *slumbered or squandered away* too much time without any useful purpose or design at all?

How many are there who, when they have morning hours on their hands, can pass them away in their beds, and lose their time in "a little more sleep, and a little more slumber!" A few trifles, with breakfast and dressing, wear out the morning, without God. And how many afternoons and evening hours are worn away in the like sauntering idleness, without one half hour's useful work, from the dawn of the morning to the hours of rest! Time is gone; and, as they knew not what to do with it while it was present, so, now it is past, they know not what they have done with it; they keep no account of it, and are never prepared

to come to a reckoning. But will the great Judge of all take this for an answer to such a solemn inquiry?

2. Have you not laid out much more time than was needful in *recreations and pleasure?* Recreations are not unlawful, so far as they are necessary and proper to relieve the fatigue of the spirits when tired with business or labor, and to prepare for new employments. But have you not followed them without due bounds? Has not some of that very time been spent in them, which should have been laid out in preparing for death and eternity, and in seeking things of far higher importance?

3. Have you not wasted much time in *frequenting clubs, in what you call good company, and in places of public resort?* Hath not the tavern or the ale-houses seen and known you from hour to hour for a whole evening, and that, sometimes, before the trade or labor of the day should have been ended? And when your Bible and your closet, or the devotion of your family, have sometimes called upon your conscience, have you not turned the deaf ear to them all?

4. Have you not made *useless and impertinent visits?* When conversation has run low, even to the dregs, and both you and your friends have been at a loss what to say next, and knew not how to fill up the time; yet the visit must go on, and time must be wasted. Sometimes the wind and the weather, or what is much worse, scandal on persons or families, have come in to your relief, that there might not be too long silence: but not one word of God or goodness could find room to enter in and relieve the dull hour. Is none of this time to be accounted for? And will it sound well in the ears of the Judge, "We ran to these silly topics, these slanderous stories, because we could not tell what to talk of, and knew not how to spend our time?"

5. Have you not been guilty of frequent, and even perpetual delays or *neglects of your proper necessary business* in civil life, or in the solemn duties of religion, by busying yourself in some other needless thing, under this pretence, "There is time enough yet?"

Have you learnt that important and eternal rule of prudence, "Never delay till to-morrow what may be done to-day; never put off till the next hour what may be done in this?" Have you not often proved your own folly by neglecting present duty? Solomon tells us, Eccles. 3: 1, 7, "There is a time for every purpose, and every work under the sun;" a proper time for every lawful work of nature and life; and it is the business and care of a wise man to do proper work in proper time; but when we have let slip the proper season, how often have we been utterly disappointed! We have sustained great evils, and sometimes it has so happened that we could never do that work or business at all, because another proper season for it hath never offered; time hath been no more. Felix put off his discourse with Paul, about the faith of Christ, and righteousness, and judgment to come, to a more convenient time, which probably never came. Acts 24: 25. And the word of God teaches us, that if we neglect our salvation in the present day of grace, the angel is ready to swear, that "time shall be no longer."

What time may yet lie before you for improvement, God only knows; the remnant of your days is with him, and every evening the number is diminished. Let not the rising sun upbraid you with continued negligence. Remember your former abuses of hours, and months, and years, in folly and sin; or at best in vanity and trifling. Let these thoughts of your past conduct impress your heart, so as to keep you ever vigorous in present duty. Since you have been so loitering in your Christian race in times past, take larger steps daily; and stretch all the powers of your soul to hasten towards the crown, and the prize. Hearken to the voice of God, in his word, with more attention and desire to profit; pray to a long-suffering God with double fervency; cry aloud, and give him no rest, till your sinful soul be changed into penitence, and renewed to holiness; till you have some good evidence of your sincere love to God, and unfeigned faith in his Son Jesus. Never be satisfied till you

come to a well-grounded hope, through grace, that God is your friend, your reconciled Father; that, when days and months are no more, you may enter into the regions of everlasting light and peace.

Time shall end! Thanks be to God that it is not already ended. Let us admire his compassion in warning us so long. Every stroke of sickness warns us that life is coming to its period; every death among our friends and acquaintances is a tender and painful admonition that *our* death also is at hand. The end of every week, and every returning Sabbath warns us; every sermon we hear of the shortness of time and the uncertainty of life, is a fresh intimation that the great angel will shortly pronounce a period to our time. How inexcusable shall we be, if we turn the deaf ear to all these warnings!

Alas! how long did Jesus, and his mercy, and his Gospel, wait on you, before you began to think of the things of your everlasting peace! And if you are now solemnly awakened, yet how long has he waited on you with fresh admonitions and with special providences, with mercies and judgments, with promises and invitations of grace, with threatening and words of terror, and with the whispers and advices of his own Spirit, since you began to see your danger. And after all, have you yet sincerely repented of sin? Have you yet received the offered grace? Have you given up yourself to the Lord, and laid hold of his salvation? "This is the accepted time, this is the day of salvation. To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." It is never said, *To-morrow* is the day of grace, or, *to-morrow* is the time of acceptance; it is the present hour only that is offered. Every day and every hour is a mercy of unknown importance to sinful men. It is a mercy, O sinner, that you awoke not this morning in hell, and that you were not fixed, without remedy, beyond the reach and hope of mercy.

Time shall end! Then happy they who welcome the event, because they are prepared for it. They need not be

afraid of the sentence, nor the oath of his mighty Angel, when he lifts up his hand to heaven, and swears, with a loud voice, "There shall be time no longer."

O blessed creatures, who have so happily improved the time of life, and day of grace, as to obtain the restoration of the image of God in some degree on their souls, and a divine assurance of the favor of God through Christ, for which end time was bestowed upon them. They have reviewed their follies with shame in the land of hope; they have mourned and repented of sin, ere the season of repentance was past, and are become new creatures, and their lips and their lives declare the divine change. They have made preparations for death, for which purpose life and time were given. Happy souls, indeed, who have so valued time as not to let it run off in trifles, but have obtained treasures more valuable than that time which is gone, even the riches of the covenant of grace, and the hope of an eternal inheritance in glory!

Blessed souls, indeed! Their happiness begins when the duration of their mortal life is finished. Let us survey this their happiness in a few particulars:

There is no more time for *temptation* and *danger*. When once you are got beyond the limits of this visible world, and all the enticing objects of flesh and sense, there shall be no more hazard of your salvation, no more doubting and distressing fear about your interest in your Father's love, or in the salvation of his beloved Son.

There is no more time or place for *sin to dwell in you:* the lease of its habitation in your mortal body must end when the body itself falls into the dust; you shall feel no more its powerful and defiling operations, either in heart or life, for ever.

The time of *conflict* with your spiritual adversaries is no longer. There is no more warfare betwixt the flesh and the spirit, no more combat with the world and the devil, who, by a thousand ways, have attempted to deceive you, and to bear you off from your heavenly hope. Your warfare is

accomplished; your victory is complete; you are made even "more than conquerors, through him that loved you."

There is no more time for you to be vexed with the *society of sinners.* Your spirit within you shall be no more ruffled and disquieted with the conversation of the wicked; nor shall you be interrupted, in your holy and heavenly exercises, by any one of the enemies of God and his grace.

The time of your *painful labors and sufferings* is no more. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors," that carry toil and fatigue with them; "there shall be no more sorrow nor crying;" the springs of grief are for ever dried up; "neither shall there be any more pain," in the flesh or in the spirit. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," and death itself shall be no more.

It is finished! said our blessed Lord on the cross. *It is finished!* may every one of his followers say, at the hour of death, and at the end of time: "My sins and follies, my distresses and sufferings, are finished for ever; and the mighty Angel swears that the *time* of these evils is *no longer.* They are vanished, and never shall return. O happy souls, who have wisely so counted the short and uncertain number of your days on earth, as to make an early provision for a removal to heaven! Blessed are you above all the powers of present thought and language! Days, and months, and years, and all these short and painful periods of time, shall be swallowed up in a long and blissful eternity. The stream of time, which has run between the banks of this mortal life, and borne you along amidst many dangerous rocks of temptation, fear, and sorrow, shall launch you out into the ocean of pleasures which have no period: those felicities must be everlasting, for duration has no limit there; time, with all its measures, is lost in vast eternity.

No. 154.

MEMOIR

OF

DR. BATEMAN,

AN EMINENT PHYSICIAN OF LONDON.

The late Dr. Bateman settled in London soon after he graduated at Edinburgh, in the year 1801; and his professional merits being very considerable, he was speedily elected Physician to two public institutions—a large Dispensary, and the House of Recovery for Fever.

In the summer of 1815 his health began to decline, and in the following year a complaint in his eyes came on, which threatened loss of sight, and precluded him from all his accustomed sources of occupation and amusement. Under these circumstances, the writer of this Memoir became his constant companion and attendant; and for four years had the misery of witnessing his total estrangement from God and religion. His health continuing to decline, he left London in July, 1819, with the intention of trying the effect of a sulphurous water at Middleton, in the county of Durham, on his debilitated constitution. He was taken ill on the road, and with difficulty reached a village near Beverly, in Yorkshire, where he was obliged to remain during the following winter; and finding, at length, that his health required the sacrifice, he finally determined not to attempt returning to London. He had for some time been subject to attacks of the most alarming nervous languor, during which he was thought, by all around him, as

well as by himself, to be dying; and these now returned upon him continually, especially after using the least bodily exertion.

It was on Sunday, the 9th of April, that he first spoke to me on the subject of religion. He had passed the whole of the day in a state of extraordinary suffering, from languor, and a variety of nervous feelings, which he always said it was impossible to describe, farther than that they were inconceivably painful and distressing; and he went to bed at night with a firm persuasion that he should never again quit it; and, in fact, he did confine himself to it for the following three weeks, from the mere apprehension of the consequences of exertion. Religion was a subject which, for many reasons, had never been discussed between us. Though the tenor of his life had made me but too well acquainted with the state of his mind, he had always avoided any declaration of his opinions, knowing the pain it would give me to hear them. He was habitually fond of argument, and skilled in it; and I knew that I was quite incompetent to argue with him. I considered, too, that the *habit* of disputing in favor of any opinion, only serves, in general, to rivet it more firmly in the mind; men *commonly* finding their own arguments more convincing than those of their adversaries. And, above all, I knew that this was a case in which mere argument must always be insufficient; for "it is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness:" and in most, if not in all cases of scepticism, the will and the affections need to be set right even more than the understanding; and upon these, argument can have no influence.

On the evening of the day I have mentioned, Dr. Bateman had been expressing to me his conviction that he could

not live much longer, and complaining of the dreadful nervous sensations which continually harassed him; and then he added, "But all these sufferings are a just punishment for my long scepticism, and neglect of God and religion." This led to a conversation, in the course of which he observed, that medical men were very generally sceptical; and that the mischief arose from what he considered a natural tendency of some of their studies to lead to materialism. I replied, that the mischief appeared to me to originate rather in their neglect to examine into the evidences of the truth of the Bible, *as an actual revelation from God;* because, if a firm conviction of that were once established, the authority of the Scriptures must be paramount; and the tendency of all inferior studies, in opposition to their declaration, could have no weight. He said, he believed I was right, and that he had in fact been intending to examine fully into the subject, when the complaint in his eyes came on, and shut him out from reading. Our conversation ended in his permitting me to read to him the first of Scott's "Essays on the most Important Subjects in Religion," which treats of "The Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures." He listened with intense earnestness; and when it was concluded, exclaimed, "This is demonstration! complete demonstration!" He then asked me to read to him the account given in the New Testament of the resurrection of our Saviour; which I did from all the four Evangelists. I read also many other passages of Scripture, with some of which he was extremely struck; especially with that declaration, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2 : 14.

For two or three days he showed increasing interest in the subject of religion; and I read to him continually the Scriptures, and other books which seemed to be best calculated to give him the information he thirsted for. When I went into his room a few mornings after, he said, "It is quite impossible to describe to you the change which has taken place in my mind; I feel as if a new world was opened to me, and all the interests and pursuits of *this* have faded into nothing in comparison with it. They seem so mean, and paltry, and insignificant, that my blindness, in living so long immersed in them, and devoted to them, is quite inconceivable and astonishing to myself." He often expressed in the strongest terms, and with many tears, his deep repentance, and his abhorrence of himself for his former sinful life and rebellion against God; but he seemed to have, from the first, so clear a view of the all-sufficiency of the Saviour's atonement, and of the Christian scheme of salvation, as freed him from that distrust of forgiveness which is so apt to afflict persons at the first sight of their sins, and of the purity and holiness of Him "with whom they have to do." The self-abasing views which he entertained of himself necessarily enhanced his sense of the pardoning love and mercy of God, in Christ Jesus, thus graciously extended to him; and which he felt so strongly, that he was filled with the liveliest emotions of gratitude and joy, and in this happy state continued for several days.

He soon, however, experienced an afflicting reverse of feeling. One evening I left him to visit a near relative, at that time confined to her room in a precarious state of health; and his mother, who had been attending upon her, took my place at the bedside of her son. Dr. Bateman told her, that I had been reading to him various detached

portions of Scripture, and that he now wished to hear the New Testament read regularly through from the beginning. She consequently began to read, and had proceeded as far as the tenth chapter of St. Matthew, when he suddenly exclaimed, that he could not believe in the miracles of the Saviour, and that therefore he must perish for ever. This suggestion of his spiritual enemy threw him into a state of the most dreadful anguish, and I was immediately sent for to his bedside.

On my arrival he had become a little more composed, but was still in great agitation; and was praying in agony to be saved, and not to be given up to this dreadful state of unbelief. To comfort his mind, we said what we could from Scripture, and from the experience of other Christians: and he was a little relieved by hearing some passages from an Essay in the volume before mentioned, "On the Warfare and Experience of Believers;" finding that his was not, as he had supposed, a case of new occurrence; but that the author of that work was already acquainted with its symptoms, and argued favorably of them, as often accompanying the progress of religion in the soul. Still, the idea that his death was fast approaching, and that there was no hope of his mind being convinced before it arrived, quite overwhelmed him. Feeling ourselves to be very inadequate guides and comforters in these afflicting circumstances, we gladly adopted the suggestion of a friend, that we should request a neighboring clergyman of piety and judgment to visit him. Dr. Bateman himself grasped eagerly at the proposal, and I wrote immediately to the clergyman in question; but he was from home, and was not expected to return for two or three weeks. A few days after this unwelcome intelligence, Dr. Bateman told me he had no doubt

this disappointment was for his good; and that it was better for him to be left to himself, as he did not think any thing could have convinced him so fully of *the efficacy of prayer*, as the sensible relief which he experienced from it during those conflicts of doubt and unbelief with which his mind continued to be harassed. He added, that he now spent whole nights in prayer. He felt perfectly assured that these doubts were the suggestions of the great adversary of souls; and remarked, that they were vividly and manifestly darted, as it were, into his mind, instead of arising from his own reflections, or resulting from any train of reasoning; and the absurdity of them, in many instances, was so obvious, that his judgment detected it at once, though he still had not power to drive them from the hold they took on his imagination, or to banish them, for the time, from his thoughts.

To these paroxysms of distress and conflict, which sometimes lasted many hours, he continued to be subject for about a fortnight; but they gradually became shorter and less violent, and he experienced increasing relief from prayer during their continuance; till at length they subsided entirely, and left his mind satisfied on all those points which had before presented so many obstacles to his belief.

About this time, he received an unexpected visit from a medical friend, whose piety and truly Christian character distinguish him still more than his eminent abilities and professional skill. This gentleman, with great difficulty, succeeded in persuading him that he was by no means in that state of danger and debility which he had apprehended, and that he had the power of taking exercise if he could but have sufficient resolution to attempt it. Experiment convinced him that this opinion was correct: he was pre-

vailed upon to leave his bed, and in a very few days was able to be some hours daily in the open air, and to take considerable exercise; and it is remarkable that from this time he had no return of languor after fatigue, except in one instance. Thus was he delivered, by the gracious providence of God, from those overwhelming apprehensions of immediate death which had been so instrumental in bringing him to Christ, as soon as they had effected that blessed purpose.

He now rarely spoke of the state of his mind and feelings; for such was the extreme reserve of his character, that it could only be overcome by deep and powerful emotions; and when no longer agitated by these, he returned to his natural habits, and was silent on the subject that most deeply interested him. Still, it was abundantly evident that it *did* interest him. The avidity with which he listened to the word of God—his eagerness to attend public worship, which for many years he had entirely neglected, and the heartfelt and devout interest which he obviously took in the service—his enlarged and active benevolence—the change which had taken place in his tastes, inclinations, and pursuits—all testified that he was indeed "brought out of darkness into marvellous light;" that "old things had passed away, and all things had become new."

In the course of the summer his health and strength were considerably recruited; but towards the close of it, a little too much exertion in walking brought on an accession of fever, and a great aggravation of all the symptoms of his disorder; but still he continued able to take a little exercise. While he remained in the country he had much leisure, which was devoted entirely to religious reading; for every other subject had now become insipid and uninterest-

ing to him; and never did the pursuits of science and literature afford him such vivid enjoyment as he now received from these hallowed studies. In November he removed to Whitby for the winter: and his health continued in much the same state till a short time before Christmas, when a walk, rather longer than usual, again increased his fever and debility; and from that period his strength and appetite evidently declined, while his spirit was as evidently ripening for heaven. His faith and patience were strengthened; his hope was increased; his charity enlarged: yet he was naturally so extremely reserved in the expression of his feelings, that he rarely spoke of them till within the last month of his life, when he rejoiced "with a joy unspeakable and full of glory," which bore down all opposition; for he experienced a happiness to which all the accumulated enjoyments of his whole previous life could bear no proportion or comparison, even that "peace of God" which "passeth all understanding," and which must be felt, or at least witnessed, in order to form any just conception of its nature and effects.

What a striking example did our dying friend now exhibit to us! From his early youth he had devoted himself with delight and industry to the acquisition of knowledge, and the pursuits of literature and science; and he "*had his reward*" in the honor and reputation which his success had procured for him—a reward which he keenly enjoyed, and very highly prized. Those who have known only the pleasures which arise from worldly gratifications, surely ought to recollect, that, being confessedly ignorant of those spiritual enjoyments which they despise, they cannot be competent to decide upon their reality or their value: it belongs only to those who have experienced *both*, to appre-

ciate either. And how did Dr. Bateman appreciate them? In contrasting, as he frequently did, his present happiness with all that he had formerly enjoyed and *called* happiness, he seemed always at a loss to find words to express how poor, and mean, and despicable all earthly gratifications appeared to him, when compared with that "joy and peace in believing" which now filled his soul; and "one particle of which," he sometimes said, "ten thousand worlds would not tempt him to part with."

And it should be remembered, that this was not the evidence of a man disappointed in his worldly pursuits: he had already, as before observed, "had his reward" in this world—he had experienced the utmost success in the path which he had chosen—he had been keenly susceptible of intellectual pleasures; and of these, as well as of all inferior amusements, he had enjoyed more than a common portion. But when the only object that can satisfy the affections and fill the capacities of a rational and immortal being was revealed to him—when he viewed, by the eye of faith, that life and immortality which are brought to light by the Gospel—earthly fame, and honor, and pleasure, sunk into the dust; and, in reflecting upon his past life, the only thing that gave him any satisfaction was the hope that his labors might have been beneficial to his fellow-creatures, for whom his charity had now become unbounded. He often said, that "the blessing of his conversion was never out of his mind day or night; that it was a theme of perpetual thanksgiving; and that he never awoke in the night without being overwhelmed with joy and gratitude in the recollection of it."

He always spoke of his long bodily afflictions with the most devout thankfulness, as having been instrumental in

bringing him to God; and considered his almost total blindness as an especial mercy, because, by shutting out external objects, it had enabled him to devote his mind more entirely to spiritual things. Often, latterly, he expressed an ardent desire to "depart and be with Christ;" but always added, that he was cheerfully willing to wait the Lord's pleasure, certain that if he was continued in this world, it was only for his own good, and to make him more "meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light."

He bore his bodily afflictions with the most exemplary patience, and even cheerfulness; and continually expressed his thankfulness that they were not greater, sometimes saying, "What a blessing it is to be allowed to slip gently and gradually out of life, as I am doing!" He would not allow any one to speak of his *sufferings*, always saying, "they did not deserve a stronger name than inconveniences." He neither complained himself, nor would permit others to complain for him. Once, when the nurse who attended him said, "Oh, that cough! how troublesome it is!" he replied, "Have a little patience, nurse: I shall soon be in a better world; and what a glorious change that will be!" Indeed, the joy of his mind seemed to have absorbed all sense of his physical sufferings. I once remarked to him, that he appeared to have experienced no intermission of these joyful feelings; and he answered, "For some months past, *never*, and never the smallest rising of any thing like impatience or complaint."

His mind, naturally active and ardent, retained all its powers in full vigor to the last moment of his life, and was never once clouded or debilitated, even in seasons of the most depressing nervous languor. Indeed, after the whole

current of his tastes and affections had been turned into a new channel, its ardor and activity rather increased than diminished, from the deep conviction which he felt of the superiority of his present views and pursuits to all that had hitherto engrossed him. During the last week of his life, especially, the strength and clearness of his intellect, and of his spiritual perceptions, were very remarkable; and on its being one day observed to him, that as his bodily powers decayed, those of his soul seemed to become more vigorous, he replied, "They do, exactly in an inverse ratio: I have been very sensible of it."

He conversed with the greatest animation all the day, and almost all the night, preceding his death, principally on the joys of heaven and the glorious change he was soon to experience; often exclaiming, "What a happy hour will the hour of death be!" He dwelt much on the description of the new Jerusalem in the Revelation of St. John, and listened with great delight to several passages from Baxter's "Saints' Rest," and to some of Watts' hymns on the same subject. Once in the night he said to his mother, "Surely, you are not in tears! Mine is a case that calls for rejoicing, and not for sorrow. Only think what it will be to drop this poor, frail, perishing body, and to go to the glories that are set before me!" Not more than an hour before his death, when he had been expressing his faith and hope in very animated terms, I remarked to him, how striking was the uniformity of faith and of feeling expressed by believers at every distance of time and place, and spoke of it as an indisputable evidence that these graces are wrought by "one and the same Spirit," and as a proof of the truth of the Bible, the promises and descriptions of which are thus so strikingly fulfilled and exemplified. He

entered into the argument with his accustomed energy, and assented to its truth with delight.

It seemed remarkable, that though he had during his whole illness been very sensible of his increasing weakness, and had watched and marked accurately all its gradations, yet he spoke, in the last moments of his life, of going down stairs, as usual—(he had been carried up and down for several days)—and said, it could not require more than a very few weeks now to wear him out; not appearing to be at all aware that his end was now very near, till about half an hour before his death. Finding himself extremely languid, he took a little milk, and desired that air might be admitted into the room; and on being asked if he felt relieved at all, said, "Very little: I can hardly distinguish, indeed, whether this is languor or drowsiness which has come over me; but it is a very *agreeable* feeling." Soon after, he said suddenly, "I surely must be going now, my strength sinks so fast;" and on my making some observations on the glorious prospect before him, he added, "Oh, yes, I am GLAD to go, if it be the Lord's will." He shut his eyes and lay quite composed, and by and by said, "What glory! the angels are waiting for me!"—then, after another short interval of quiet, added, "Lord Jesus, receive my soul!" and to those who were about him, "Farewell!" These were the last words he spoke: he gradually and gently sunk away, and in about ten minutes breathed his last, calmly and without a struggle, at nine in the morning of the 9th of April, the very day on which, twelve months before, his mind had first been awakened to the hopes and joys of the ever-blessed Gospel!

No. 155.

ON UNIVERSALISM.

"IF THE BLIND LEAD THE BLIND, BOTH SHALL FALL INTO THE DITCH."

I WAS some time ago called to visit the death-bed of a professed Universalist. For many months of lingering illness, he had retained his confidence; and he now seemed as if about to expire in the full belief of his favorite doctrine. But the near approach of the destroyer revealed to him the unsubstantial character of his foundation, and annihilated his hope. "I find," he observed to an afflicted relative and friend, "that my principles do not support me. The doctrine of universalism answers well enough to live by, but not for the dying hour." Such was the heart-rending confession of one who had been, for a series of years, extremely confident in his belief. He lived to discover and acknowledge his unhappy mistake; but alas!—

Soon after his decease, another individual of the same creed, with whom the writer had been particularly acquainted, was laid upon a sick bed. In a few days, his case assumed an aspect which greatly alarmed his friends. He was kindly informed of the prospect before him, and gradually relinquished all expectation of recovery; but he betrayed no anxiety, and actually felt none, for the result. His language to his afflicted relatives was, "Do not mourn over *me;* I have no fears of death; nor do I wish to live beyond my appointed time. If it is God's will that I depart, I am prepared to go."

On one occasion we were summoned to his bed side to see him expire. He thought himself to be dying, and still manifested the greatest composure, both in respect to his dissolution and the consequences that were to follow it. We had ceased to reason with him as to the grounds of his confidence; but we persevered in commending his precious soul to the mercy of that God who has promised to hear the prayer of faith. A few hours after this scene, he was suddenly, and in a manner unaccountable to himself, im-

pressed with the reality of a hell, and his fearful exposure to descend into it. His conviction of his sinfulness before God, and his apprehensions of immediate destruction, became, in an instant, overwhelming, and indescribably dreadful. With the confession of the returning prodigal, and the trembling anxiety of the affrighted jailer, he cried to God for mercy. And the writer is enabled to state, as the pleasing result, that he became a hopeful penitent, and was, contrary to expectation, rescued from the mouth of the tomb, to afford the most satisfactory *proof* of his conversion to God. His language now is, that, through the divine mercy, and the renovating power of the Holy Spirit, he has escaped eternal damnation.

The individuals above mentioned were possessed of discriminating minds, had both enjoyed the advantages of a good education, and were considered by their acquaintance as being *moral*, and uncommonly *amiable*. They were well known to be decidedly attached to the doctrine of universal salvation. Neither of them betrayed, at the dying hour, any doubt, or misgivings, on the ground of his not being an honest, thorough-going Universalist; but they both found universalism itself to be a delusive and fatal dream.

The writer could add to these instances of recantation and solemn warning several others of essentially the same character; but he chooses rather to present the reader with a plain scriptural argument in proof of the doctrine of future punishment. In doing this, however, he wishes it to be understood, that this argument will be one of many, and perhaps not the most striking, which might be produced, did the limits of a Tract permit a more ample discussion. Whether it be conclusive, is left to the candid and prayerful judgment of the reader. The Scriptures, then, inform us,

That no inconsiderable number of mankind have continued to be impenitent and unbelieving sinners, under every dispensation of the Gospel; and also, that there will be a general judgment, at which those who have thus persevered in impenitence and unbelief will be recognized in their proper character, and consigned to everlasting punishment. There are three steps by which we shall arrive at the proof of this proposition.

1. No inconsiderable number of mankind *have continued*

to be impenitent and unbelieving sinners, under every dispensation of the Gospel. Salvation by Jesus Christ began to be announced immediately after the apostasy; and was unfolded to mankind with increasing light, through rites and ceremonies, visions and prophecies, until his incarnation and death removed all remaining obscurity. With this announcement of salvation were always connected the requisitions of repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Scriptures tell us of some, in the old world, who walked with God, and were righteous; of many, in the ages succeeding the flood, who attached themselves to the true religion, and embraced the coming Messiah in prospect; and of multitudes who, during his ministry and that of his apostles, believed in him, followed his holy example, and devoted themselves to his cause in the world.

Still, the Scriptures do not obscurely hint the melancholy and disgraceful fact, that vast numbers of mankind have, under every dispensation of the Gospel, pursued a different course. Thus did most of the antediluvians, in the days of Noah; the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah; and, probably, those of many of the cotemporary cities. Thus did many of the Israelites, in Egypt, in the wilderness, and after they had been put in possession of the holy land. Thus, also, did most of the Jews and Gentiles, who heard the Gospel from the mouth of Christ and his faithful apostles. Inspiration everywhere testifies to the fact, that no inconsiderable portion of mankind have persevered in their impenitency and unbelief, in spite of all the means which have been used for their reformation. It as plainly distinguishes such as continue impenitent and unbelieving, from those who repent and obey the Gospel; and in language the most humiliating and ominous. It denominates them "the wicked," "the unbelieving," "the world," "workers of iniquity," "children of darkness," "children of the devil," and "children of wrath." It describes them as "not having the love of God in them," as "being lovers of pleasure," and "lovers of themselves, more than lovers of God," "without hope and without God in the world." The true believer is admonished of their hostility to Christ, and required to come out from among them, and renounce their friendship, as being enmity with God. "Whosoever, there-

fore, will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God." James 4 : 4. In this manner, the impenitent sinners of the old world, and of subsequent ages, were distinguished from the pious individuals who dwelt among them. Thus, also, were the sinners of the Jewish nation distinguished from the prophets and true worshippers of Jehovah, who labored to reclaim them from their apostasies. And thus Jesus Christ and his apostles distinguished the multitudes who refused their instruction, from such as received and obeyed it. Both the Old Testament and the New, the Jewish and the Christian dispensations, the prophets and the apostles, united in recognizing this essential difference of moral character among men; and while they inform us that multitudes of our race have embraced the great salvation, and evinced their attachment to it by a holy life and conversation, they declare, with equal plainness, that other multitudes have continued to be, through life, impenitent and unbelieving.

What was true of the antediluvians, the inhabitants of Sodom, and the Jews who rejected the Messiah, is true of all the impenitent. They carry with them into the eternal world the character which they have possessed and exhibited through life. But the Scriptures inform us,

2. That there will be a *general judgment*, at which those who shall have continued through life impenitent and unbelieving, will be recognized in their proper character, and consigned to punishment. "I said in my heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked." "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Eccles. 3 : 17; 12 : 14. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge *the world* in righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained." Acts 17 : 30, 31. "So, then, *every one* of us shall give account of himself to God." Rom. 14 : 12. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Heb. 9 : 27. These are a small part only of the passages that announce a day of general judgment. Not one of them has reference to the destruction of the Jews, or to any other partial visitation of our world. The judgment which they disclose is to occur after death, and embrace the whole of mankind. *Every one* of us shall

then appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and give account of himself to God. "I saw," said the beloved disciple, "the dead, *small* and *great*, stand before God; and the books were opened." Rev. 20 : 12.

At the general judgment, men will be recognized in their true character. God will bring *every work* into judgment, with *every secret thing*. "Every *idle word* that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Matt. 12 : 36. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will *bring to light the hidden things of darkness*, and will make *manifest* the *counsels of the hearts*." 1 Cor. 4 : 5. This exposure of human conduct will present every man in his true character; will show to the universe what individuals of the human race have remained impenitent and unbelieving. Of the certainty of this recognition of the impenitent, and of their being consigned to punishment, we have the most decisive proof. Felix was certainly pressed with this assignment of the wicked to a state of punishment, or he would never have *trembled* at Paul's discourse on "righteousness, temperance, and *judgment to come*." The apostle must have had his eye upon this very circumstance, when he announced to the Athenians, that God commandeth all men everywhere to repent, "*because* he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness."

But let us attend to a few plain declarations on this point. "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much *sorer* punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord." Heb. 10 : 28–30. "For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law; *in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ*, according to my Gospel." Rom. 2 : 12, 16. "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you, who are troubled, rest with us, *when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven* with his mighty angels, in

flaming fire taking *vengeance on them* that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thess. 1 : 6–8 "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against *the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*" 2 Pet. 3 : 7. The apostle having, in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, adverted to the coming of Jesus Christ to raise the dead, observes, "For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden *destruction* cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." 1 Thess. 5 : 2, 3. Jesus Christ himself, referring to the resurrection of the dead, declares, "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and *they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.*" John 5 : 28, 29. He has also given us, in the 25th chapter of Matthew, a formal and particular account of the general judgment, to which the reader is referred. Other quotations might be added; but if the unequivocal declaration of God, "that he has appointed a day, in the which he will judge the *world in righteousness;*" "will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the *heart;*" and that "the wicked shall come forth unto the resurrection of *damnation,*" "be recompensed with *tribulation,*" the "vengeance of Christ," and "perdition," do not prove "that there will be a general judgment, at which those who shall have continued through life impenitent and unbelieving, will be recognized in their *proper character,* and consigned to *punishment,*" the writer knows of no form of expression, no declaration of Jehovah, that would prove it. It, however, remains to show,

3. That the punishment to which the impenitent and unbelieving will be consigned is *everlasting.* It is sometimes spoken of in Scripture as *a deprivation, and then the idea conveyed is, that it will be endless.* "I go my way," says Christ to the Jews, "and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins; whither I go, ye cannot come." John 8 : 21. "He that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life." John 3 : 36. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither for-

nicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Cor. 6 : 9, 10. "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Rev. 22 : 19. A multitude of other passages might be added, which convey the idea that the impenitent will suffer a final and everlasting deprivation. To *die in our sins*, and therefore be *unable to come* where Christ is ; "*not to see life*," nor to "*inherit* the kingdom of God ;" but to have our part "*taken out* of the *book of life*, out of the *holy city*, and from the *things written* in this book," comprise a reprobation that is *final*, the exclusion of the soul from all future good.

The Scriptures present the future punishment of the wicked *in contrast with the reward of the righteous ; and then, too, the idea is conveyed of their punishment being eternal.* "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be *saved ;* but he that believeth not, shall be *damned*." Mark 16 : 16. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to *everlasting life*, and some to *shame and everlasting contempt*." Dan. 12 : 2. "They that have done good, will come forth," at the call of Christ, "unto the resurrection of *life ;* and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of *damnation*." John 5 : 29. "And these," the impenitently wicked, "shall go away into *everlasting punishment;* but the righteous into *life eternal*." Matt. 25 : 46. Now, it will be admitted, that for a believer to be *saved*, to awake to *everlasting life*, to come forth unto the *resurrection of life*, and to go away into *life eternal*, is to enter into endless happiness. Will those who are *damned*, who awake to *shame* and *everlasting contempt*, who come forth unto the *resurrection of damnation*, and go away into *everlasting*, or eternal *punishment*, also enter into endless happiness ? Is not their destruction put in plain and awful contrast with the eternal life of the righteous ?

But the Scriptures afford us *the most direct proof of this fact.* Hell is described as a place prepared originally for the devil and his angels, to whom no mercy is offered ; the place in which God is *able to destroy both soul and body ;*

and *where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.* Mark 9 : 43–48. But to this very prison of Satan, this scene of eternal torment, will the impenitent sinners of our race be consigned at the general judgment. They shall go away into *everlasting punishment, prepared for the devil and his angels;* into that *very hell,* where their worm *dieth not,* and *into the fire that never shall be quenched;* into that "*lake of fire which is the second death.*" They will thus "come forth unto *shame* and *everlasting* contempt;" will "be punished with *everlasting* destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." 2 Thess. 1 : 9. "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up *for ever and ever.*" Rev. 14 : 9–11.

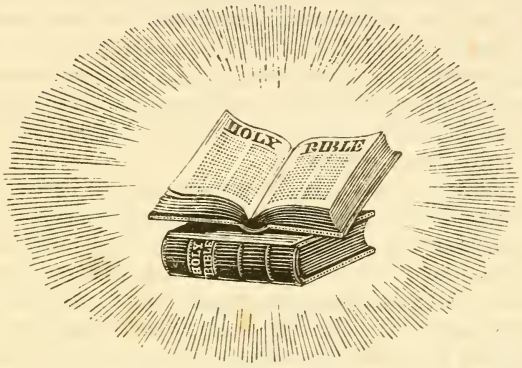
Let the reader now pause; consider prayerfully the preceding argument, and decide as on his dying pillow. Can these most unequivocal declarations of God's word be honestly and safely set aside? Is that system which fearlessly proposes to do it worthy of thy confidence? Especially, is it becoming a wise and prudent man, to intrust his *eternal* welfare to this common resort of the licentious and profane; to launch into the ocean of eternity upon such a plank?

Fellow-immortal, if thy soul be once lost, thou art lost *for ever!*

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY.

No. 156.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.



The Holy Scriptures are more ancient than any other writings, yet they were not given to the world to amuse us with an account of past occurrences, but to instruct us in the way to eternal life. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning." Suppose a parent at a distance were to write you a letter, containing such information and such directions as would tend to your real happiness and welfare, would it not be ungrateful not to open his letter, or not to regard its contents? In the Bible, God speaks to us with infinite condescension, as a parent to a child. Without it, we are all in darkness concerning his nature and will, and all in uncertainty respecting our future state. We shall do well, therefore, "to take heed unto it, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." Beware of neglecting the Scriptures. The learned Salmasius, when dying, said, "I have lost a world of time. If I had another year added to my life, I would spend it in reading David's psalms and Paul's epistles."

That the Scriptures are given by inspiration of God, is proved by prophecies that have been fulfilled, by miracles that have been wrought, by threatenings that have been executed, and by promises that have been accomplished in the experience of all who have believed them from the heart. The majesty, and purity, and simplicity of these writings; the uniform statement in all the books, respecting the nature of God and the character of man; and the present state of the Jewish people, in addition to the above proofs, are more than sufficient to satisfy every humble and inquiring mind, that none but God himself could have given such a book.

Unbelievers can offer you nothing that can be compared with the Bible; they would leave you in ignorance here, and expose you to misery hereafter. They resemble the maniac who was seen perpetually burnishing a piece of brass, and, on being asked to what use he intended to apply it, said, "I design it for a sun, which shall give more light and heat than that which God has placed in the firmament."

There is something in the oracles of God suited to every character and situation in life. Let the *worldly-minded* "seek out of the book of the Lord," and read Ecclesiastes, to learn the vanity of the world; *the moralist*, the book of Proverbs, and the sermon on the mount, to learn *true* morality; *the man who depends on his own merits*, the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, to know the *true* way of acceptance with God; *the unfruitful professor*, the Epistles of St. James and St. Peter, to discover the genuine fruits of a living faith; *the profane and unbeliever*, the 2d Epistle of Peter, and the Epistle of St. Jude, to know the fearful consequences of sin and unbelief; *the heart in danger of apostasy*, Hosea and Hebrews, to preserve it, or to recover it from its wanderings; *the man observant of Providence*, the book of Esther, in which, though the name of God is not found, the hand of God is so clearly seen; *those who are engaged in great undertakings for Church and State*, the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, that they may proceed in the

fear of God, and in dependence on him; *the devotional*, the Psalms of David, to purify and heighten their devotions; *the afflicted*, the books of Job and Jeremiah, that they may know how to endure trials; *the true believer*, the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians, that he may perceive what it is to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour; and the prophecies of Isaiah and Zechariah, that he may rejoice in the prospect of the future glory of the church, and in the final triumph of the Christian cause; and *the preacher*, the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, that he may "take heed to himself and to his doctrine, and continue in them, and save himself and them that hear him." Not that any should confine themselves to one part of Scripture, however appropriate to them; but let all search every part, and read *doctrines* for their edification, *promises* for their comfort, *precepts* for their guidance, *invitations* for their encouragement, *examples* for their imitation, and *threatenings* to deter them from sin and unbelief.

Let not difficulties discourage you: they will vanish by degrees. Compare one part with another, and, as you read, *examine yourself, and inquire*, What *doctrine* does this chapter contain? Do I believe it? What *promise?* Do I need and desire the blessing? What *precept?* Do I make it the rule of my life? What good *example?* Do I follow it? What bad example? Do I avoid it? And as you read, also *pray*, "Lord, give me faith in thy truth; cause me to walk in the way of thy commandments; what I know not, teach thou me; let thy word be a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path; put thy laws in my heart, and on my mind write them, and my sins and iniquities remember no more, according to thy gracious promises, which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus." If you thus examine, inquire, and pray, your path will resemble the shining light, "which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov. 2 : 1–9.

The Bereans compared the doctrine they heard from St. Paul with the written Scriptures of the Old Testament. "It is incredible to any one," says Bishop Horsley, "who

has not, in some degree, made the experiment, what a proficiency may be made in that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation, by studying the Scriptures in this manner, without any other commentary or exposition than what the different parts of the sacred volume mutually furnish for each other. I will not scruple to assert, that the most illiterate Christian, if he can but read his English Bible, and will take the pains to read it in this manner, will not only attain all that practical knowledge which is necessary to his salvation, but, by God's blessing, he will become learned in every thing relating to his religion in such a degree that he will not be liable to be misled, either by the refined arguments, or by the false assertions of those who endeavor to ingraft their own opinions upon the oracles of God. Let him study the Scriptures in this manner, and *let him never cease to pray for the illumination of that Spirit by which these books were dictated*, and the whole compass of abstruse philosophy and recondite history shall furnish no argument with which the perverse will of man shall be able to shake this learned Christian's faith. The Bible, thus studied, will prove to be a certain and sufficient rule of faith and practice, a helmet of salvation, which, alone, may quench the fiery darts of the wicked."

Parents, therefore, *search the Scriptures*, for your own sake, and the good of your children. "These words shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deut. 6 : 6, 7 ; Gen. 18 : 19.

Children, search the Scriptures, that in early life you may become wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus, and escape the corruption and misery to which ignorance of the truth will lead. Psalm 119 : 1–9 ; Eccles. 12 : 1 ; 2 Tim. 3 : 14, 15.

Masters and heads of families, search the Scriptures, that you may know that "you have a Master in heaven," that you may enjoy the privileges of his servants, and that you

may learn the responsibility under which you lie, with reference to those who are under your care. Prov. 3 : 33; 1 Cor. 7 : 22; Col. 4 : 1.

Servants, search the Scriptures, that you may know your duties and your privileges, and learn to fill up your appointed station in society in the fear of God, with credit to yourselves, and to the comfort of your employers. Ephes. 6 : 5–8; Titus 2 : 9, 10; 1 Pet. 2 : 18–20.

Rich and poor, old and young, search the Scriptures; they are designed to keep you from the snares which attend riches, and the temptations which beset poverty; to be the guide of your youth, and the comfort of your old age. 1 Tim. 6 : 17; James 2 : 5; Heb. 13 : 5; Prov. 15 : 16, 17; Isa. 46 : 4; Jer. 3 : 4.

"O how joyful it is," said a Russian officer, "to read that the word of God is counted worthy of all acceptation! It is the only treasure I need. This, this is my riches; with it I am ready to die."

"During my stay at Antigua," says a friend to the circulation of the Scriptures, "several pious blacks requested a few Bibles and Testaments might be given them. For this they begged in a very affecting manner. We advised them to read to such as were unable to read, and then to lend their Testaments to such as were disposed to read for themselves. This they promised to do; and on receiving the rich treasure, their joy was inexpressible, as might be seen by the tears which flowed down their sable faces."

"What an excellent book is the New Testament," said a Catholic soldier, who had taken one with him to Breslau. "Twelve of us assemble every evening in the barracks; one reads, and the others listen to the glorious things spoken there; should I ever return to you, my dear mother, you shall find a son in me quite different from what I was."

"Take and read the Scriptures," says St. Augustine, "for whatsoever is in them is high and divine; there is verily truth, and a doctrine most fit for the refreshing and renewing of men's minds, and truly so tempered that every one may draw from thence that which is sufficient for him,

if he come to draw with a devout and pious mind, as true religion requires."

"Love the Scriptures," says St. Jerome, "and wisdom will love thee."

"I adore the fulness of Scripture," says Tertullian: "I do not admit what thou bringest in *of thine own*, without Scripture."

So Justin Martyr: "We must know, by all means, that it is not lawful or possible to learn any thing of God, or of right piety, save out of the prophets, who teach us by divine inspiration."

"There is depth enough in the Bible," says Gregory, "to exercise the wise, and plainness enough to instruct the weak; it being like a river, as having its shallows and depths, wherein the lamb may wade as well as the elephant swim."

"Were the Bible," says one, "but considered impartially and attentively, in its most advantageous lights—as it contains all the written revelation of God's will now extant; as it is the basis of our religion, and gives vigor and spirit to our social laws; as it is the most ancient, and, consequently, curious collection of historical incidents, moral precepts, and political institutions; as the style of it is, in some places, nobly sublime and poetical, and in others, sweetly natural, plain, and unaffected; in a word, as the being well acquainted with it is highly requisite in order to make men useful in this life, to say nothing of their happiness in the next—of what mighty service must it be to the interest of religion, and, consequently, to the happiness of mankind!"

Martin Luther must have had the deepest conviction of the excellence of the Holy Scriptures, since "he was so zealous to have them read, that he professed, if he thought the reading of *his* books would hinder the reading of *them*, he would burn them all before he died."

It has been the united voice of the Protestant church in every age, that "the Scriptures are the only and sufficient rule of faith and practice." And a voice more authorita-

tive than that of the church has declared, that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3 : 16, 17.

Whatever be his rank or station in society, happy is the man that can say, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." And unhappy is the man to whom "the word of the Lord is a reproach, and who has no delight in it." Jer. 6 : 10. *According as we regard it now, will be our state in the world to come;* we shall be saved or condemned according to it. What an interesting book to us all! "Heaven and earth shall pass away," was the declaration of Him who came into the world to save sinners, and who will appear as the Judge of quick and dead. Mark 8 : 36–38.

Let no day pass without reading a portion. A single verse may be as the pebble out of the brook, with which David slew the giant; or as a guardian angel to preserve you from many an evil spirit. "It is written," said the tempter, when he assailed our Lord. "It is written again," was our Lord's reply; and with this sword of the Spirit the adversary was overcome. Matt. 4 : 7–11.

Great is your privilege: "The word is nigh thee," even in thy house; or it may be so. Having procured it for yourself, provide such a treasure for your children; and then do what you can to impart it to others. "If," said Dr. Johnson, "obedience to the will of God be necessary to happiness, and knowledge of his will be necessary to obedience, I know not how he that withholds this knowledge, or delays it, can be said to love his neighbor as himself. He that voluntarily continues in ignorance, is guilty of all the crimes that ignorance produces; as to him that should extinguish the tapers of a lighthouse, might justly be imputed the calamities of shipwreck."

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul:" then let us give it to the *unconverted* of mankind. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple:"

then let us give it to the *uninstructed* of mankind. "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart:" then let us give them to the *miserable* of mankind. Nor let us cease to search the Scriptures for ourselves, or cease to impart them to others, till our own souls be filled with wisdom, love, and joy; and till there be not an unconverted, uninstructed, or miserable being upon the earth. For our encouragement to do this, the word is gone forth, and it shall not return void. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Isaiah 11 : 9.

Let these sayings sink deep into your heart: search the Scriptures, and forget not their leading object, which is to testify of Christ, as "the Lord our righteousness;" the propitiation for our sins, and our Advocate with the Father. Jer. 23 : 6; 1 John, 2 : 1, 2; Rom. 10 : 9–12. Believe on him, and follow him, and you shall be happy with him for ever.

"If any man have ears to hear, let him hear."

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Acts 20 : 32.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. *Amen.*"

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No. 157.

TO THE PARENTS OF SABBATH-SCHOOL CHILDREN.

It is a great mercy that God has preserved both you and your children to this time. How many fathers and mothers are torn from their helpless babes! Multitudes of infants pine away and die before the eyes of their weeping parents. Many are born blind, or deaf and dumb; and some are idiots, without sense to learn, or to do any thing to get their bread. How kind, then, has the Lord been to you. Though you may be poor, he has given you health to work, or friends to help you; so that you and your children have been kept from starving. He has graciously provided for the good of your children's minds, by inclining people to teach them to read the Bible. If you cannot teach them yourselves, or pay to have them taught, how thankful should you be to the Lord for putting it into the hearts of other persons to do so much good to your children. It will cost them some money, and time, and trouble; and they are not related to you, nor do they expect any reward from you; but they are willing to do this for God's sake, who has taught us to

love our neighbors as ourselves. If you love your children, you will be very glad to use such means to do them good.

By sending them to the Sabbath-school, you may do them great good, and keep them from much harm. Do you not find that if your children have nothing to do, they get into mischief? When they play about in the streets they are apt to learn the bad words and bad behavior of the worst children they meet with. They are not thankful nor dutiful to you now; and what may you expect when they grow up. Is it not likely, and almost certain, that they will grow worse and worse, if they are not taught better, and kept out of harm's way? What can you do with them on the Sabbath, so well as to send them to worship God, and to be taught to read the Bible? This will show them how wrong it is for them to lie, or swear, or steal, or disobey their parents. It will show them that God is angry with children who do such things, and that he will turn them into hell if they go on so. If they come to know and mind what the Bible tells them, you will not have the trouble to scold and beat them, in order to keep them from doing what is wrong. They will remember that *God* always sees them, and they will be afraid of displeasing him.

On the other hand, if they have not the fear of God before their eyes, you know not to what end they may come. How common it is for young people to be led to commit crimes that ruin them for ever! There is not a week passes without some being taken up, and put in prison. How many are sent to the state prison, who in other countries would suffer on the gallows; and even here, hardihood in crime leads to murder and to execution. What should hinder your children from taking the same course that so many fall into, if they are not kept from temptation, and taught what is right while they are young? Most poor creatures that die for their crimes, say, that they began to be ruined by not keeping the Sabbath. And how can your children be hindered from this sin, but by being sent to a Sabbath-school, and by attending public worship? Whether they are able or not to work at any thing the rest of the week, you cannot, and ought not, to make them work on the Lord's day. The fourth commandment says, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy: in it thou shalt not do any work; thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter." If you

cannot teach your children at home yourselves, the only way likely to keep them from wicked courses, is to send them to a Sabbath-school.

Doing this, is likely not only to keep them from harm, but also to do them great good. If they mind what they are taught in the Bible, they will behave well to you, and to every body. Those who are so kind as to instruct them, will take notice of them, and will be glad to employ them as they grow up, or recommend them to persons who can provide better for them. Many poor children have come to be comfortable in their circumstances, and greatly respected, by getting learning, and behaving well; and yours are as likely to do so as others. So, they will not only become more dutiful and useful to you while they are children, but when they become men and women, and you are old and feeble, they will be glad to support and comfort you under your infirmities.

If there were no future life, and no other world but this in which we live, it would be much for your own and your children's interests that they should read and mind the Bible. Among the people you are acquainted with, how much better off are those who are decent, sober, honest, and diligent, than those who are idle, drunken, lewd, and dishonest! But the Bible is *God's book*. It was written by persons who knew and loved God, and all that they say is true. It pleased God to teach them, and by their means to teach us, that there is another life after this, and that they who know and love God in this world will go to heaven; while they who will not learn and do his will, must go to hell. You and your children will be sure to go to one or the other of these places when you die, and will there be happy or miserable *for ever*. Now, how shocking will it be, if you and they should be together in hell, and they should tell you, "This is because you did not teach us better, nor let others teach us, who wished to do so!" But how happy will it be for you to see your children in *heaven*, and hear them blessing God for having given them parents who taught them to love and serve him!

Are you not ready to weep at these thoughts? "Yes," perhaps you say, "but what good can that do? I am not fit to go to heaven, nor my children neither. Young as they are, they have already learned much evil; and they

are so perverse, that I have no hope they will become better." Too many persons have reason to make this complaint, and too few are aware of it. If this be *your* case, it is bad indeed; but the Bible teaches us the only way to escape the wrath to come. It tells us that *Jesus Christ* came to save sinners, that he died for them, and all that believe on him shall have everlasting life. Hence it is that St. Paul wrote to young Timothy, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." Neither you nor your children can be saved while you neglect the Scriptures. If you read them, you will see this to be true; and you will see that God gives his *Holy Spirit* to them that ask him.

If any of you cannot read, you are much to be pitied; but you may hear the Scriptures explained and preached; and if you do not, you will perish without excuse. But what a happy thing it is, that the Lord provides means for your children to learn better! The Lord Jesus Christ said, when he was upon the earth, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." How guilty must those parents be who will not suffer their children to come to Christ; and can they come to Christ, if they do not learn the Scriptures, which teach us who he is, what he has done and suffered for us, and how we may be saved?

If your children wish to learn these things, would it not be unkind to hinder them? But you cannot expect them to know what is good for themselves, if you do not tell them. They are likely to love play more than learning; but if you let them have their own way in every thing, you will be sure to ruin them, and to make them torments to yourselves. Whereas, if you take care always to send them to a Sabbath-school, at the proper hours, they will soon get the habit of going, and of obeying you in other things. Bless God that he has inclined any body to teach them; send them early and constantly to learn; and take care to do and say nothing that would hinder the blessed effects of it for this life, and that which is to come. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY.

No. 158.

EXAMINE YOUR HOPES FOR ETERNITY.

"YE SHALL NOT SURELY DIE!" Gen. 3:4. This was the grand delusion by which the father of lies first succeeded in introducing sin into the world. The God of truth had declared, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." But as truth and falsehood are directly opposed to each other, Satan boldly gives the lie to God, and echoes his words with a flat contradiction, "Ye shall NOT surely die!" Alas! our first mother was beguiled by the subtlety of the serpent; she believed the lie; she ate the forbidden fruit; and so "sin entered into the world, and death by sin."

From that day to this, Satan is still carrying on the same delusion in the hearts of the children of men, and tempting them to sin, and lulling their consciences into security, by whispering to them, "Ye shall not surely die!" While they are committing the very acts, and indulging the very propensities, and walking in the very courses of which God has declared that the "end is death," Satan tells them that they shall not die, and teaches them, "while they hear the words of God's curse, to bless themselves in their hearts, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart." Deut. 29:19.

READER, it is doubtless the persuasion of your mind that you shall not die; that you shall not be given over to that "second death," in which "the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;" for if you had not this persuasion—if you verily believed that the death of your body would be the death of your soul too, and that your departure out of this world would be the beginning of everlasting torments, it would be impossible that you could enjoy any rest in your conscience, or any comfort in your soul; you must needs tremble continually under the "fearful looking-for of judgment," and of that "fiery indignation" which awaits you. Now, as this is a matter of such infinite moment, you cannot be too serious in your con-

siderations respecting it; it becomes you to inquire, with the utmost humility and faithfulness, whether your *hopes for eternity* are such as are warranted by the word of God, and as will not make you ashamed in the last awful day: in a word, whether it is the God of truth, or the father of lies, that tells you you shall not die.

"Thou shalt not surely die." What is the ground on which you build this hope?

1. Is it *that you do not deserve to die?* But how can you maintain this plea before the heart-searching God? It may be that your character is comparatively amiable, and unstained with any of those open vices which incur the punishment of human laws: you may even be esteemed, admired, and loved, by your fellow-creatures, for those dispositions and qualities which render you agreeable and even useful in society. But, "to the law and to the testimony;" it is not by the standard of human applause, but by the perfect word of God, that the great question of life or death will be decided at last. That word lays down the rule, and denounces a curse upon all who transgress it. The rule is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." The curse is, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in ALL THINGS that are written in the book of the law to do them." Now, have you never broken this law? Have you never sinned against it in thought, word, or deed? Have you not loved yourself better than your neighbor, and the world better than God? Nay, have you not that carnal mind which "is enmity against God?" Have you never broken the Sabbath? Have you not robbed God of the honor, worship, and reverence which you owe him? Your conscience says, Yes. The law of God requires perfect obedience, and accepts of nothing imperfect. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." "There is none righteous, no, not one;" and therefore to every one who has no better hope than his own deservings, God says, "Thou shalt surely die!"

2. Another plea which many make to persuade themselves that they shall not die, is, *that they are no worse than others.* They look upon the world at large, and

comparing themselves with their neighbors, ask the self-complacent question, "If I perish, what is to become of thousands whose case is no better than my own?" Doubtless Satan made very successful use of this argument in the days of Noah: "I pretend to do as well as others; and if the flood *do* come, I shall fare as well as they!"—"The flood came, and took them *all* away!" Matthew, 24: 39. Now, with respect to this plea, which is so generally popular with an unthinking world, it is remarkable that it grounds the hope of safety on that very point on which the word of God rests the certainty of condemnation. The sinner says, I am no worse than the rest of the world: God says, "The whole world lieth in wickedness." 1 John, 5: 16. If, then, we are not distinguished from them as "a peculiar people," we too are "lying in wickedness."

Again, St. Paul enumerates it among the undeniable evidences of a state of guilt, condemnation, and death, that they "*walked according to the course of this world.*" Ephesians, 2: 2. And this he declares to be the same as walking "according to the prince of the power of the air;" that is, according to the mind and will of Satan. What, then, is the condition, and what the hope, of those whose best plea is that they are walking according to the course of this world?

But our Lord himself has clearly settled this point, and cut off all hope from those who look to be saved because they are no worse than others; for he says, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matthew, 7: 13, 14. Now, by a strange delusion of Satan, these persons make that as an excuse which our Lord declares to be the plainest mark of condemnation: namely, that they are walking in the "broad way;" that is, living as the multitude of men are living. It is a point clearly defined here, that the right way is a "narrow way;" and if we are living much the same as others, if our conduct is that which is countenanced by the example of "many;" if we belong to the same class as the great majority of men, then unquestionably we are

"of the world," and we are walking in "the broad way that leadeth to destruction." To such persons, then, while Satan is saying, "Ye shall *not* surely die," the awful and unalterable word of God declares, "Thou *shalt* surely die!"

3. A *third* ground on which many encourage hopes that they shall escape everlasting death is, that *they mean to repent:* they have a general conviction on their minds that all is not right; their conscience tells them they are not fit for heaven; nay, they will acknowledge, in so many words, that if they die in their present state, they must perish everlastingly. But then they *mean to repent*, and make all right before they die! Death, as they think, is very distant; and old age, and sickness, and a death-bed, natural seasons for repentance and preparation for eternity: they have *now* many things to engage their attention, and make the work of religion unseasonable and difficult; but *then*, they think, it will all come to them in a way so easy and natural—nothing to call off their attention—nothing to do but the one work, which they will then do in earnest! Others there are, who cling to a delusion which they consider more safe: they by no means intend to put off these things to the *very last;* but the present is not the time: they are still waiting for some future period: "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow!" It shall be the next week, or the next year, or some indefinite future time, and then they will set their hearts to it.

Alas! how many thousands have carried this lie in their right hand into eternity! Still intending to repent, and never doing it; still promising to themselves an opportunity which they never find; they die in their sins, and in their sins they perish! Reader, are you thus forming purposes of *future* repentance and amendment? But what if God say to you, as he did to one of old, "Thou fool, THIS NIGHT thy soul shall be required of thee!" Luke, 12:20. "As Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a *convenient season* I will call for thee." Acts, 24:25.

But these resolutions of future repentance, even if

sincere, are by no means to be relied on. For, first, there is the awful uncertainty whether the more "convenient season," which we promise ourselves, will ever arrive. God may have determined to bear with us no longer; and may refuse to lengthen out the opportunities which we have trifled with so long. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Proverbs, 27 : 1. Death may come upon us in an instant, without any previous warning of its approach, and hurry us into the presence of our God before we have begun that great work which we have *intended* to do. "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall SUDDENLY be destroyed, and that without remedy." Proverbs, 29 : 1.

Again, persons who thus promise to repent at a future time, do not rightly consider what repentance is. They think it a very easy work, consisting of a few formal and unmeaning confessions; a superficial sorrow for sin, or rather a dread of its punishment; a consenting to give up their sins, just when the opportunity of sinning is departing; and making peace with God for their past transgressions, by expressing their hope in Jesus Christ, and offering up a few prayers for mercy. Such a work as this, may of course be begun at pleasure; and, when begun, it is soon finished. How different is this from true repentance unto life; a "godly sorrow" for sin—a being "pricked in the heart"—an "abhorring ourselves, and repenting in dust and ashes"—a "smiting upon our breasts, and saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner"—an anxious inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?"—a "looking" to the Saviour "whom we have pierced" by our sins, "and mourning for him as one mourneth for his only son, and being in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." Zechariah, 12 : 10. Now surely, this change of heart, this being "born again," and "made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light," is too serious and important a matter to be huddled up in the precarious hours of sickness, or to be crowded in among the pressing occupations of the closing scenes of life.

Nor should it be forgotten, that the longer the work of repentance is delayed, *the more dreadful our state be-*

comes. The habits of sin grow upon us, and, by long indulgence, the chains get rivetted upon our hearts. Our feelings become blunted, and our consciences hardened against the awful concerns of eternity: we become less disposed to think seriously about our souls; and every year and every month that we resist the warnings of conscience, we are provoking God to give us up to obstinate and hopeless impenitence, and tempting his Holy Spirit to withdraw from us utterly. We feel the force of habit in the most ordinary concerns of life: certainly its influence is proportionably greater in those concerns which are everlastingly important. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are *accustomed* to do evil." Jer. 13: 23.

If my reader, then, is one of those who are resting with complacent satisfaction on the promises of future repentance, let me earnestly entreat him to consider, that he has no secure hope but in an *immediate* repentance toward God, and faith in Jesus Christ. "To-DAY, while it is called to-day!" "Behold, now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." "The night cometh, when no man can work." "Escape for thy life: look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." Heb. 3: 13. 2 Cor. 6: 2. Eccles. 9: 10. John, 9: 4. Gen. 19: 17.

4. But there are some whose hope is very different from any that have been mentioned; who hope they shall not die, *because Christ has died for them* and risen again, and ever liveth to make intercession for them; seeing they have, through grace, "fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them" in Christ Jesus; and having believed in his name, they are persuaded that their "sins, which are many, are forgiven" them, through Him who hath loved them, and washed them from their sins in his blood. Having also the seal and witness of the Holy Ghost in their hearts, even the spirit of Jesus, the spirit of child-like willingness to obey the Father, in which spirit they are striving daily in his strength to mortify the deeds of the body, over-

come the world, and subdue Satan; the same pirit, even the Holy Ghost, bears witness with their spirit, and assures them that that shall not die for ever! Yes, reader, these persons have "a good hope through grace." 2 Thess. 2 : 16. Every other hope but this, as I have attempted to show, is vain and delusive; but this is "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." Heb. 6 : 19. This is the hope which will not "make ashamed" in the last awful day, when "the hope of the hypocrite shall perish," and be "like the chaff which the wind driveth away." Job, 8 : 13. Ps. 1 : 4. In that day, when "the books shall be opened, and the dead shall be judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works," the true and faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus may exclaim, with triumphant hope, "Who is he that condemneth? It is CHRIST THAT DIED. Yea, rather, that is risen again." Rev. 20 : 12. Rom. 8 : 34.

The security of such persons before God arises from this—that Christ has died for them—has endured the wrath of God for them; has paid the debt which they have incurred by their sin; and satisfied to the utmost the demands of God's broken law; because his blood is sufficient for the salvation of all who believe; and the benefits of his death are freely given to all who come to him. His salvation is effectual to all his people who believe in him. They receive him as their Saviour, flee to him as their refuge, trust in him as their sacrifice, commit themselves to him as their surety, and obey him as their Lord and Master. To such all the promises of God are addressed, and sealed with the blood of the Redeemer: "they shall not perish, but have everlasting life." "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." John, 10 : 28. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Matt. 13 : 43.

CONCLUSION.

My dear reader! The four descriptions of character here set before you, comprehend the whole world; and therefore in one or other of them you are included. But

how awfully important is the inquiry, to which of them you belong. The first three classes are in a state of imminent danger; and if they are not conscious of this, their danger is increased by it instead of being diminished. Only the last class are in a state of spiritual safety. Let me earnestly entreat you to examine this great point, and endeavor to ascertain what is your condition before God. You would not willingly remain in ignorance as to the state of your worldly affairs: why should you be ignorant respecting those which are infinitely more important? You like to know how your accounts stand with your fellow-men: how much more necessary is it that you should inquire how matters stand between you and your God! "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Do not, then, neglect the concerns of your SOUL. If conscience warns you that you are not in a state of preparation for death and fitness for heaven, lose no time in seeking a good hope before God. It is a matter of too awful importance to be trifled with. Delay may be ruin. You cannot measure the value of eternity; you cannot conceive the unutterable magnitude of the bliss or the misery that awaits you beyond the grave. "Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands" of years! "Escape for thy life;" flee for refuge from the wrath to come; neglect it no longer, lest it be too late! Use the means of grace, with a penitent and believing heart: pray; read your Bible; attend the public worship of God; forsake your sins; seek the Saviour; lay hold on everlasting life!

O sinner! embrace the offers of mercy while there is yet time: accept the blessings of salvation by a dying Saviour; and in the hour of death and the day of judgment the voice of that Saviour will whisper to you, "THOU SHALT NOT SURELY DIE." "I have redeemed thee:" "thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help;" "thy sins are forgiven thee;" "because I live, thou shalt live also."

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No. 159.

THE

REWARDS OF DRUNKENNESS.

If you wish to be always thirsty, be a Drunkard; for the oftener and more you drink, the oftener and more thirsty you will be.

If you seek to prevent your friends raising you in the world, be a Drunkard; for that will defeat all their efforts.

If you would effectually counteract your own attempts to do well, be a Drunkard; and you will not be disappointed.

If you wish to repel the endeavors of the whole human race to raise you to character, credit, and prosperity, be a Drunkard; and you will most assuredly triumph.

If you are determined to be poor, be a Drunkard; and you will soon be ragged and pennyless.

If you would wish to starve your family, be a Drunkard; for that will consume the means of their support.

If you would be imposed on by knaves, be a Drunkard; for that will make their task easy.

If you would wish to be robbed, be a Drunkard; which will enable the thief to do it with more safety.

If you would wish to blunt your senses, be a Drunkard; and you will soon be more stupid than an ass.

If you would become a fool, be a Drunkard; and you will soon lose your understanding.

If you wish to unfit yourself for rational intercourse, be a Drunkard; for that will accomplish your purpose.

If you are resolved to kill yourself, be a Drunkard; that being a sure mode of destruction.

If you would expose both your folly and secrets, be a Drunkard; and they will soon be made known.

If you think you are too strong, be a Drunkard; and you will soon be subdued by so powerful an enemy.

If you would get rid of your money without knowing how, be a Drunkard; and it will vanish insensibly.

If you would have no resource when past labor but a workhouse, be a Drunkard; and you will be unable to provide any.

If you are determined to expel all comfort from your house, be a Drunkard; and you will soon do it effectually.

If you would be always under strong suspicion, be a Drunkard; for, little as you think it, all agree that those who steal from themselves and families will rob others.

If you would be reduced to the necessity of shunning your creditors, be a Drunkard; and you will soon have reason to prefer the by-paths to the public streets.

If you would be a dead weight on the community, and "cumber the ground," be a Drunkard; for that will render you useless, helpless, burdensome, and expensive.

If you would be a nuisance, be a Drunkard; for the approach of a Drunkard is like that of a dunghill.

If you would be hated by your family and friends, be a Drunkard; and you will soon be more than disagreeable.

If you would be a pest to society, be a Drunkard; and you will be avoided as infectious.

If you do not wish to have your faults reformed, continue to be a Drunkard; and you will not care for good advice

If you would smash windows, break the peace, get your bones broken, tumble under carts and horses, and be locked up in watch-houses, be a Drunkard; and it will be strange if you do not succeed.

If you wish all your prospects in life to be clouded, be a Drunkard; and they will soon be dark enough.

If you would destroy your body, be a Drunkard; as drunkenness is the mother of disease.

If you mean to ruin your soul, be a Drunkard; that you may be excluded from heaven.

Finally, if you are determined to be utterly destroyed, in estate, body, and soul, be a Drunkard; and you will soon know that it is impossible to adopt a more effectual means to accomplish your—END.

"All the crimes on earth," says Lord Bacon, "do not destroy so many of the *human race*, nor alienate so much *property*, as *drunkenness*."

Drunkenness expels reason—drowns the memory—defaces beauty—diminishes strength—inflames the blood—causes internal, external, and incurable wounds—is a witch to the senses, a devil to the soul, a thief to the purse—the beggar's companion, the wife's woe, and children's sorrow—makes a strong man weak, and a wise man a fool. He is worse than a beast, and is a self-murderer, who drinks to others' good health, and robs himself of his own. He is worse than a beast, for no animal will designedly intoxicate itself; but a drunkard swallows his liquor, well knowing the condition to which it will reduce him, and that these draughts will deprive him of the use of his reason, and render him worse than a beast. By the effects of liquor his evil passions and tempers are freed from restraint; and, while in a state of intoxication, he commits actions which, when sober, he would have shuddered to have thought of. Many an evil deed has been done, many a MURDER has been committed, when those who did these things were intoxicated.

Tremble, then, if ever you taste the intoxicating draught. Reflect, before you put the cup to your lips. Remember that you are forming a habit which will lead on to the commission of every crime to which the propensities of your nature, rendered violent by indulgence, can urge you. Before you are aware, you may find yourself awaking from a fit of intoxication, guilty of offences against the laws of your country which will draw down just vengeance upon your head; abhorring yourself, and an abhorrence in the sight of heaven.

Drunkenness, persisted in, will assuredly *destroy your soul,* and consign you to everlasting misery. Hear what the *word* of *God* declares.

"Awake, ye drunkards, and weep." Joel 1 : 5.

"Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contention? who hath wounds without cause? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine; at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." Prov. 23 : 29–32.

"Woe unto them that rise up in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!" Isa. 5 : 11.

"Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink. Isa. 5 : 22.

"The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: uncleanness, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Gal. 5 : 19, 21.

These are awful declarations, and they will certainly be fulfilled upon him who continues to delight in drunkenness; he cannot enjoy the love of God, he will not be received into heaven.

Separate yourself, then, utterly from this ensnaring sin. "Touch not; taste not; handle not." In ENTIRE ABSTINENCE is your only safety. This persevered in, you shall never fall. Wherever and however the temptation is presented, "avoid it—turn from it, and pass away." Turn also from every sin. "Commit your way unto the Lord," and he will "direct your paths." A glorious provision is made for your salvation, through the atoning blood of Christ. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3 : 16. Commit your soul and your all to him. He will guide you through life, enable you to vanquish every foe, and crown you with victory in heaven.

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No. 160.

THE TWO ENDS

AND

THE TWO WAYS.

The design of this Tract is to obtain your attention to a concern of the most serious moment. Read it impartially, and do not reject its statements, since you cannot prove them to be untrue or unimportant. Be assured, that whatever is your age or station, you have a deep and unavoidable interest in the subject. It relates to the *two ends* which close the present life, and the *two ways* which conduct to them.

These *ends* are as far removed from each other as *heaven* and *hell;* a state of everlasting happiness, and one of endless misery.

The *first* is spoken of in the Bible with the most inviting descriptions. It is paradise, Luke 23 : 43; fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore, Psa. 16 : 11; a state containing blessings which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, 1 Cor. 2 : 9; and where the positive evils of this life, want, Rev. 7 : 16, pain, sorrow, Rev. 21 : 4, weariness, Heb. 4 : 9, sickness, Isa. 33 : 24, separation, 1 Thess. 4 : 17, death, Rev. 21 : 4, can never come. Such are only a few of the delightful views of heaven which are to be found in the Scriptures.

The *second end* is depicted in the most awful and alarming terms. It is called a lake of fire and brimstone, Rev. 20 : 10; a worm that dieth not, and a fire that is not quenched, Mark 9 : 48; a flame without one drop of water

to cool the tongue, Luke 16 : 24, 26 ; *everlasting* destruction from the presence of the Lord, 2 Thess. 1 : 8, 9 ; a place where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, Matt. 8 : 12 ; 13 : 50.

And can you, reader, reflect, without emotion, that to one of these ends you must come ? Can you feel indifferent to which ? Are you desirous of knowing towards which you are now proceeding ? You may know it by considering the *two ways* which respectively conduct to the ends which have been described.

The *first*, which is the way of life, is trodden by a comparatively small number. It is called a narrow way, on account of the difficulties encountered by those who walk in it. Matt. 7 : 13, 14. Would you enter it, you must begin with submitting your own notions of things to those contained in the Bible. What that book says of your being a sinner, Rom. 3 : 9, 23, under the wrath of God on account of your transgressions, Rom. 1 : 18, must be believed at the very outset ; and if you compare your thoughts and conduct with the law of the ten commandments, you will find every thing in the Scriptures on this head fully proved. The declarations which they contain relating to God's mercy, and his forgiveness of all who come to him by faith in the Saviour crucified for sinners, you must likewise receive. Rom. 3 : 24, 26. Jesus Christ is emphatically "the way," as well as "the truth and the life," John 14 : 6 ; "a new and living way." Heb. 10 : 19, 20. An honest confession of your state as a sinner, and a thankful reception of gratuitous salvation through the cross of Christ, you will find to be very contrary to the pride and self-righteousness of your heart. Rom. 10 : 3. *The ground of your aversion* to this way is, that it is the way of holiness, Isa. 35 : 8, repentance, Acts 17 : 30, prayer, 1 Thess. 5 : 17, heavenly-mindedness, Coloss. 3 : 1, 2, and self-denial, Mark 8 : 34. And

such is the alienation of your heart, that you will not cease your aversion to this way, until your soul is renewed by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and thus receives a new and heavenly character. Rom. 7 : 18 ; John 3 : 5. Then spiritual religion will be your delight. God will give you wisdom, and strength, and victory over every remaining corruption, 2 Cor. 12 : 9 ; and the excellency of the way itself, with the peace, hope, and joy which attend it, a clear conscience and a pure heart, will make it delightful. 1 Pet. 1 : 8.

The *other* way is broad, its entrance wide, its frequenters many. Matt. 7 : 13, 14. It is the way of transgressors. Among its travellers are found persons of very various characters. Some are openly profane, or entirely careless of an eternity to come. 2 Peter, 3 : 3, 4. Others, under a form of religion, reject some important truth of Scripture, or hold the truth itself in unrighteousness. 1 Tim. 1 : 19 ; Rom. 1 : 18. The moralist who spurns the word of God, and the false professor of religion who perverts it, are alike crowding this dangerous path. Here may be found the drunkard, the unchaste, the liar, the slanderer, the perjured, the cheater, the envious, the malicious, the selfish. 1 Cor. 6 : 9–11. Here are the lovers of money, pleasure, and honor ; with all that countless number who give their hearts to the world, mind earthly things, and are thus enemies of the cross and service of the Redeemer. Phil. 3 : 18–21.

Such are the *ways* which conduct to *ends* so opposite.

And in which of these ways are you walking ? To which of these ends is every day bringing you nearer ? If you are in the road that leadeth to life, I rejoice with you. If you are in the broad and dangerous path, let me earnestly implore of you to lose not an instant in quitting it. The way of salvation lies open before you. Seek it without delay, lest the hand of death seal your everlasting ruin.

Repent of your sins. Bow your knees and your heart

in prayer for mercy. Cast yourself wholly on Christ; receive him as your only and all-sufficient Saviour. *Whatever* have been your past character and sins, he has made an ample provision for your return to GOD. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." 1 John, 1: 7. "*Whosoever* believeth in him, shall not perish, but have eternal life." John 3: 15. Object not that you are bound by the "chain of your sins;" that you have "no health" in you; and that you cannot release or heal yourself. The Saviour came to proclaim liberty to the captives, Luke 4: 18, and he offers himself, as a great Physician, to heal all your moral and spiritual maladies, and to give you a new and divine nature. Luke 5: 31; 2 Peter, 1: 4. Trust wholly and alone in him, and he will save you with an everlasting salvation.

With this very design has he promised the gracious influences of his Holy Spirit, to illuminate the understanding, to renew the will, and to sanctify the affections. Luke 11: 13. And of these healing waters he invites you to partake, and says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." John 7: 37–39. "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Rev. 22: 17.

FLEE, THEN, FROM THE WRATH TO COME! LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE!

*** Look for the Scriptures referred to, and consider attentively the following passages: Psalm 1; Matt. 7: 24–29; Matt. 25, throughout; John 3; Romans 3; Eph. 2; Hebrews 8.

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No. 161.

THE

RESCUED BRAND.

A NARRATIVE OF FACTS

Early in the spring of 1847, I was called to visit an aged man who was very sick. Some time previous, having heard of his illness, I had offered to visit him, but was advised to wait until his own consent should be procured; for he had declined any conversation relative to his eternal prospects. Two or three weeks elapsed, when at his own desire I went to see him at the house of his son, with whom he resided.

Before entering the sick room, a worthy female friend, who was the first-fruits of my ministry in ——, after she had attained the age of *seventy-three*, took me aside, and thus

advised me: "The life of Mr. B—— has been spent in dissipation and ungodliness. For many years he has never been inside of a church. He has spent his Sabbaths in ordinary employments. He has been unwilling to hear any thing of religion, and especially of death. Yet he cannot live long. His disease is violent. But he has said that he would be willing to see you. I don't know how he will receive you. Perhaps he will listen; but his son says he is afraid that he will only insult you if you should speak with him." With these precautions she ushered me into the room of the sick man.

It was with an agitation and perplexity, only overpowered by a sense of duty and the promises of a faithful God, and after breathing a silent prayer for "grace to help in this time of need," that the writer entered that chamber.

Mr. B—— was sitting on the side of a low bedstead, apparently in great pain, and in his haggard countenance were visible the marks of disease and death, and a sunken, troubled spirit. His age was sixty-three. His disease dropsy in the chest. He received me with apparent indifference, scarcely raising his eyes from the floor. I spoke to him as kindly as possible, inquiring about his disease, and offering him a little aid in changing his position.

After a long pause, he looked up and said, in a hurried tone, "So you are a minister, eh? How long have you been preaching?"

I replied kindly to his inquiries; and after a few more similar questions and answers, stated the object of my visit, when he replied,

"Sir, the Almighty has been pleased to lay his hand heavily upon me."

That does not sound like infidelity, thought I, and it encouraged my trembling spirit. He had now opened the way, and it only remained for me to follow its windings. A hint

upon the unreasonableness of infidelity, brought him out again.

"Oh, sir, I do not see how any man in his senses can be an infidel. Why, that setting sun, and the very grass of the field, prove that there is a God."

One remark led on to another, each pressing closer upon his own situation as an undone sinner hastening to the judgment. He conversed freely, and O, what a joyful surprise and cause of thankfulness it was, instead of meeting the expected insult and hardened infidelity, to find that old man mourning over his sins, and seeking deliverance from impending wrath.

These were some of his expressions: "God has been too lenient with me. I have lived sixty-three years in this world, and this is my first sickness. My life has been a hard one. Prosperity has hardened my heart. Religion has been neglected. Afflictions might have had a better influence. Now I am soon to die. But O, my poor soul, my poor soul; what shall become of it?"

I pointed him to "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world," and tried to explain and bring the truth home to his heart. He assented to all that was said; but for *him* there seemed no refuge nigh. His guilty conscience gave him no rest, nor peace.

Before leaving, I engaged in prayer at his bedside. It was a solemn season, and he too appeared to feel it deeply. He asked me to come to see him soon again, and I retired, having learned a new lesson in pastoral experience, and I trust, with an humbled and thankful heart, that had just received new impulses to labor in the Master's work. Often when we fear most, God is most gracious. Heart and flesh may fail, but his word endureth for ever; and I have thought since then, that I could enter more fully into the feelings of Ananias when God sent him to Saul of Tarsus. The thought

of meeting the persecutor quelled even his spirit; but, "behold, he prayeth," gave joy and boldness.

At the next interview with Mr. B——, he appeared much in the same spiritual state as before, but his convictions seemed deeper, and his apprehensions more fearful. Yet there was "a glimmering from afar," that was full of promise. He acknowledged the avenging justice of God. He only wondered that God had not crushed him like a moth, years before. But the mercy of God through Jesus appeared to him infinite and adorable. In his cross was his only hope. He wanted to surrender himself to Christ; but doubts and fears mingled like bitter waters in his cup. There was an anxiety to be saved. He saw the way of life; but he must enter in by the strait gate.

This was the state of his soul for some time longer. I was told by a member of the family, that they frequently heard him when alone, and even in the depth of night, in tones of deepest anguish exclaiming, "Oh my poor soul, my poor lost soul;" and then they heard prayers mingling with his groans, prayers for mercy and the salvation bought with blood.

After this I visited him frequently until his death. His conversation, always interesting, and often expressed with great force and beauty, showed him deeply read in the secrets of his own heart, and increasingly desirous of a most thorough and decided change of heart. Fear of self-deception, a sign of spiritual exercise which should not be undervalued, was a most prominent trait. We cannot detail these conversations, but present some specimens which will enable the reader to form a better idea of Mr. B——'s exercises.

In answer to the question, whether his sins of omission or of actual transgression gave him most concern, he replied with emphasis, "My sins of omission."

Surprised, I said, "But according to your own account

you have been a very great sinner. Your actual sins have been aggravated and enormous."

"Oh yes, sir," said he; "but then I think, if I had not omitted my duties, I should not have committed those sins."

Referring one day to the darkness of his prospects, in connection with his belief of the gospel way of salvation, and his willingness to accept Christ as his Saviour, he said, "But I want proof—something to satisfy me that I am redeemed."

"What *kind* of proof do you want, Mr. B—— ?"

"Oh, sir, I want something tangible; or if I may so say, like an audible voice telling me that I shall die happy—that my salvation is sure."

I endeavored to correct this erroneous impression by pointing him to other and better evidences of a gracious state—to his often-professed delight and comfort in prayer—to answers to prayer already granted him in his deeper convictions of sin, his greater anxiety, and his comfort from God's word. The progressive nature of grace in the heart was also adverted to. On this latter point, the following illustration fixed his attention, and tended to change his views.

"How, Mr. B——, did you learn to read? Was it not by slow degrees; first the alphabet, then joining letters and syllables and words? and even then it was only by constant practice that you at last could read correctly and rapidly. So now you are learning only the A B C of religion. You are a child in God's school, and you cannot expect immediately to

'read your title clear
To mansions in the skies.'"

And again, "God will give grace according to his children's need. He can give you dying grace in the dying hour; and while suffering affliction, give you grace to endure

that. But it seems to me, as if you are impatient to shout victory before the battle is won."

On another occasion, when asked, "Do you read your Bible constantly?" he looked up earnestly and said, "My disease prevents me from reading."

"But, sir, you know that the Bible is God's truth, and the only directory in the way of life."

"That is true, sir," was the striking reply; "but I am building on what I learned from my mother when I was a boy. For many years afterwards I never read my Bible; but passages that I learned then and had forgotten, are coming back to me as if I had learned them yesterday."

Indeed, his acquaintance with Scripture was accurate and large. He quoted readily and with force, and seemed to derive real comfort from its remembered pages. What a beautiful illustration of the power of early associations, and of the importance of sowing the good seed in the bright morning of childhood. Who can estimate the power of a mother's teachings, even after her flesh has long rested in the tomb? Look at this example, where a man, after more than half a century of sin, and on his dying bed, found sweet consolation for his aching heart in the unforgotten tones and instructions of a mother's early love. Perhaps this may encourage to greater parental faithfulness, and even bring some glimmering consolation to many a father or mother now mourning and saddened at the thoughts of some wayward, wandering, prodigal child.

As his illness increased, Mr. B——'s views brightened. His hope was fastened on the Redeemer's cross. Earth was given up without regret, and heavenly visions cheered the prospect.

One afternoon I found him in great bodily distress. "Oh," said he, "it seems as if I could hardly suffer more. Sometimes I feel as if scalding water was poured upon me,

and my bones are almost out of joint with pain. Oh, death would be a loving-kindness to me—death would be a loving-kindness. Yet what is all this to what my Saviour endured for me? I deserve even more than this."

"Do you feel as if you could wait patiently till the end?" I asked.

"O yes, sir, I desire to be perfectly submissive to God's will. It is all right I know, and as long as he chooses I am willing to suffer."

This spirit of resignation marked all his latter hours. There was one view respecting the Saviour, frequently expressed by him, that seemed remarkable. It was this. While he rested all his hopes upon the atonement of Christ, his most adoring contemplations, his most precious views, were drawn from his intercession. "When I try to pray," said he, "I feel ashamed and overwhelmed; but when I look upward and see my blessed Intercessor standing at the throne, then I can pray." Indeed, this was the name by which he delighted to honor his Master—"*My precious Intercessor.*"

We only ask here, Is not this a part of the mediatorial work which most Christians fail duly to appreciate? Does it form a principal source of our holy joy and comfort? And if not, why should it longer be so? How, indeed, can we grow in grace, how can we be advancing Christians while forgetful of this high and present office-work of "our great High-priest, who ever liveth to make intercession for us."

At the close of one of the visits mentioned above, an affecting scene occurred. After referring to his great bodily sufferings, and the welcome with which he would meet death, I engaged in prayer with him as usual. He was deeply affected, and immediately upon my closing, he began to pray himself. Such a prayer never fell upon my ears. It was laying hold of the everlasting throne; and he poured

out his whole soul there, as if none but God could hear. Every person in the room was melted to tears. It was as impressive and solemn as an earthly scene can be. I thought that I never knew what real wrestling prayer was before this. And the tones of that voice, deep, though feeble and trembling, and uttering such petitions as you might suppose would have become the publican or the penitent thief, can never be forgotten. It was one of those scenes over which angels delight to hover, and rejoice.

After this, we met but once or twice. The sick man's powers of mind and body sunk rapidly. For an hour or two before his death, he seemed lethargic and exhausted. The powers of expression were denied him at the last, but his previous testimony was so protracted, and full, and convincing, that we have every reason to believe that his end was peace, and that now the sufferer is at rest.

A death-bed repentance is generally to be suspected, but there are exceptions, when souls are renewed and taken speedily home to heaven—brands plucked from the burning, to shine as jewels in our great Redeemer's crown.

In this little narrative, the writer has desired to tell of a monument of grace, newly erected in Zion by the great Head of the church. It is presented as an encouragement to faithful pastoral duty, even when fear and trembling seize the heart; as a fine illustration of the power of a mother's training; as a rich record of Christian experience; and as a blessed example of what the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ can accomplish, even in the heart of the chief of sinners. In the humble hope that it may do good in Zion, it is now sent forth on its mission to the reader's heart.

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No. 162.

COMMON ERRORS.

"THEY ALL WITH ONE CONSENT BEGAN TO MAKE EXCUSE."

FIRST ERROR.

IT WILL BE SOON ENOUGH FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT RELIGION AT SOME FUTURE TIME.

This is one of the most common errors, and one of the most successful temptations of Satan. If your conscience be in some measure awakened, and you feel anxious for the salvation of your soul, he will suggest delay. As Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Acts 24: 25. This convenient season most probably never arrived. Though God has given this solemn warning against delay, and has repeated the important lesson in many parts of his word, yet how many thousands are continually making the same excuse, and thus exposing themselves to everlasting destruction. Can you insure your life for a day, or even for one moment? The rich man, gazing with delight on his property, said to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But God said unto him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Luke 12: 19, 20. God may even now be passing the same sentence on the sinner who dares, against his most solemn commands, and the warnings of his word, to put off the concerns of his soul. O that the young would regard the admonition, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Eccles. 12: 1. "The Son of man cometh at

an hour when ye think not." Luke 12 : 40. The Holy Ghost saith, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Heb. 3 : 7, 8. If you wait till to-morrow, you will then feel less; serious thoughts may wear off, and you may be, and most likely will be, "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Heb. 3 : 13. "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Prov. 29 : 1. Though you have in former times often been guilty of delay, you are again warned of the awful danger to which you expose your soul, and you are now invited to hear the gracious words of Jesus Christ, "the way, and the truth, and the life." John 14 : 6. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." Rev. 3 : 20. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. 6 : 2. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55 : 6, 7.

SECOND ERROR.

I HAVE NEVER INJURED ANY ONE, I HAVE NEVER BEEN A SWEARER, A ROBBER, OR A MURDERER, LIKE OTHERS; IF I AM NOT SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF MULTITUDES?

This you secretly say to your own heart; and because you are not so bad as some others, and have generally been a kind neighbor and friend, you think that you surely must be saved. These feelings show your ignorance of yourself and the word of God. Observe what the Scriptures say of all mankind, and of you among the number.

"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3 : 23. "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." Rom. 3 : 12. "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." Gen. 8 : 21. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually." Gen. 6 : 5. Why are these strong declarations of the sinfulness of man stated in the Bible? The Apostle Paul gives the reason: "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Romans 3 : 19. Is this your character, as written in the divine word, which cannot lie, and yet are you boasting of your having a "good heart?" Delude yourself no longer, but learn that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Jer. 17 : 9. And behold, in your ignorance of yourself, one proof of this affecting truth. Your being free from the gross outward sins which others commit, will not excuse you for the pride, the evil thoughts, the carnal desires, the secret sins, of which you have been guilty. If your being better than some others would save you, why should Jesus Christ, who is "God over all, blessed for ever," have taken your nature, lived a painful life, and died a shameful death, "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself?" Heb. 9 : 6. "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Matt. 9 : 12, 13. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke 13 : 3 and 5. Seriously reflect on the solemn and infinitely important declaration of Jesus Christ, which was made to Nicodemus, a man of excellent moral character: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3 : 3. "Ye must be born again." John 3 : 7. "For God so loved the world

that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3 : 16. "Lord, save, or I perish!" "God be merciful to me a sinner."

THIRD ERROR.

GOD IS TOO GOOD TO PUNISH ME FOR A FEW FAULTS; TRUE, ALL ARE SINNERS, BUT THE ALMIGHTY IS VERY MERCIFUL, AND WILL BE SURE TO FORGIVE ME.

God is merciful, and infinitely good; but at the same time, as infinitely just, holy, and pure. He proclaims himself, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Exod. 34 : 6, 7. You consider your sins to be few and slight; but does God thus regard them: the God who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil," Habak. 1 : 13; in whose sight the heavens are not clean, and even his angels he charged with folly? Can you appear before such a God, and attempt to conceal or palliate your sins? Because the criminal makes light of his offence, will this indifference lead the judge to pass by his crime? Because you choose to shut your eyes against your guilt and deserved punishment, can you therefore reasonably hope to escape? Will the cold, dull, general, heartless confession, which you make, that "all are sinners," be regarded with acceptance by him who searches the hearts of the children of men, and is acquainted with all their ways? No: for no less a sacrifice than that of Jesus Christ, who was Immanuel, God and man, could expiate sin, and thereby satisfy the infinite attribute of divine justice. Hence, the infinite value and efficacy of the blood of Christ in pardoning and cleansing from all

sin. Rest, then, no longer, on a broken reed. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God." 1 Pet. 5 : 6. Bow before the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, confessing all your sins, with all their numerous aggravations. "For him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Acts 5 : 31. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." Psalm 2 : 12. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Gal. 6 : 14.

FOURTH ERROR.

I DON'T SEE BUT I AM QUITE AS GOOD AS SOME PEOPLE, WHO MAKE A GREAT NOISE ABOUT RELIGION.

Notice the parable of the Pharisee and Publican, which the Lord Jesus Christ spake to some who, like you, "trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others." Luke 18 : 9–14. Seriously read this parable, and meditate upon it most attentively and humbly. Self-righteousness is natural to the human heart; but it is founded on ignorance of the holiness of God, and the spirituality of his law. "They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God; for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth." Rom. 10 : 3, 4. In this Christian country there are many persons so ignorant of the word of God as to boast, or at least, secretly to pride themselves on account of their good deeds. If all the good works that ever were done could be performed by one individual, they could not

procure the pardon of a single sin, or make atonement to a holy God. "When ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." Luke 17 : 10. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin." 1 John, 1 : 7. Because there are some persons pretending to be religious, who yet by their works deny God, and show that they are hypocrites, such conduct does not prove that there are no true Christians, nor will it be any excuse for your neglect of your soul. God will judge you by his holy law, and not by comparing one sinner with another. All are sinners, all are condemned; and the only way of escape for any, is by flying for mercy to the Lord Jesus Christ. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4 : 12. It will be in vain for you to expect to escape in the multitude, or to please yourself with the idea of being as well off as others. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Rom. 14 : 12. You will stand exposed singly to the piercing eye of God, as much as if you were the only being in the universe to be judged. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Heb. 2 : 3.

FIFTH ERROR.

I HAVE HAD SO MANY SUFFERINGS IN THIS LIFE, THAT I SHALL NOT SUFFER HEREAFTER.

How utterly ignorant you must be of the word of God, to imagine that your own sufferings can make any atonement for your sins before an infinitely just and holy God! Your sorrows are caused by your sins, they cannot procure pardon for, or excuse them. All the sufferings you endure,

you have deserved; and far heavier would have been your distress, if God had dealt with you after your sins, and rewarded you according to your iniquities. If the sufferings of man could atone for his sins, some of the vilest of characters would escape punishment, on account of the very consequences of their crimes. Could you bear all the sufferings of all the miserable who have ever lived, this would not take away one of your sins, or in the least degree reconcile you to God, or prepare you for heaven. The only atonement for sin is the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53: 5, 6. Trust, then, no longer, in your own sufferings, but remember that "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." 1 Peter, 3: 18. Hear the words of a gracious Saviour: "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11: 28. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" John 1: 29. View his ardent labors—the reproaches, the persecutions, the sorrows which he endured—follow him to the close of his life—gaze on his agonies in the garden—ascend the hill of Calvary—behold him lifted up on the cross—hear him exclaim, "It is finished," and then "he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." John 19: 30. Why all these aggravated, these undeserved sufferings? Why this cruel and shameful death? "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5: 8. He died that

sinners might live—he arose from the grave—he ascended to heaven—and there he is employed in pleading for all that believe on him. I have deserved to suffer present and everlasting misery, for my numerous sins against such a Saviour. "I have sinned against heaven, and before thee." Luke 15: 18. "Jesus, Master, have mercy on me."

SIXTH ERROR.

RELIGION MAY BE VERY WELL FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LEARNING; BUT AS FOR ME, I AM NO SCHOLAR.

It is written in the Scriptures, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." Isaiah 54: 13. And St. Paul shows, in the first chapter to the Corinthians, that it is not by man's wisdom or learning that he can know any thing of God; therefore you may pray to God to give you his Holy Spirit to teach you, with as much hope of acceptance as the most learned man in the world. Read your Bible, love God, and pray to him to give you understanding, and a heart to profit by it; and he will clear up to your mind all that is necessary for your salvation. Hear also the ministers of the word of God constantly, and pray to God to give you grace to understand and receive what you hear. The promise is, "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord." Hosea 6: 3. And the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has loved you, and came down from heaven to redeem your soul, having shed his blood for the remission of your sins, will give you the Holy Spirit to teach you all things, if you are willing, and do not slight and neglect so great salvation; and since he is so gracious, so willing, and so powerful, it is your own fault that you are ignorant of the way of salvation. The learning which Christ requires, he thus expresses: "Learn of me, for I am

meek and lowly in heart." Matt. 11 : 29. He shows the reason why men do not believe on him : "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." John 3 : 19. "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." John 5 : 40. O pray to be made wise unto salvation. "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." Psalm 25 : 9. The Gospel inculcates humility of heart ; and this will be better for you than all the wisdom of this world. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5 : 3. See also 1 Cor. 3 : 18.

SEVENTH ERROR.

IT IS NO MATTER WHAT WE BE : IF WE ARE SINCERE, WE ARE THEN SAFE.

To answer those who thus flatter themselves, it will be sufficient to refer to what the Apostle Paul said of himself, as he looked back on the time when he was employed in persecuting the saints to prison and to death : "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth ; which things also I did in Jerusalem." Acts 26 : 9, 10. He was sincere, though in a wrong cause, and being stopped by the grace of God in his evil course, he was converted, and became a most zealous defender of that Saviour whom he had persecuted by persecuting his disciples. St. Paul, referring to himself at a later period of his life, still remembers his former sins, and says, "I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God ; but by the grace of God I am what I am." 1 Cor. 15 : 9, 10. "This is a faithful saying, and

worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; *of whom I am chief.* Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." 1 Tim. 1: 15, 16. O that such penitent, humble, holy sentiments were deeply felt by you! Then you would no longer be boasting of your sincerity, but would be earnestly crying to God for mercy, through "Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant." Heb. 12: 24.

EIGHTH ERROR.

I CANNOT HAVE GRACE IF GOD DOES NOT GIVE IT TO ME, AND THEREFORE I AM NOT TO BLAME.

Do you presume to charge your Maker with injustice? Will not the Judge of all the earth do right? While you thus reflect on God, are you using the means of grace? Are you earnest in prayer? constant in God's house? attentive to your Bible? Are you earnestly striving to enter in at the strait gate? You are not. You are forgetful of God, you are running into temptation, you are exposing your soul to evil; and then you dare, while living in the neglect of God's commands, to accuse the Almighty of injustice. Would the man who had wholesome food provided for him, which he refused to eat, be able to blame any one but himself because he was perishing? Would the individual who voluntarily took poison, be just in blaming God for not preventing his death? "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth

forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." James 1: 13–15.

NINTH ERROR.

I WILL TRY TO MAKE MYSELF FIT TO BE SAVED.

Vain attempt! You may as well endeavor to create a world, as to make yourself fit for the salvation of Jesus Christ. You are a sinner by nature and by practice, and of yourself will never feel any true desire to be pardoned and made holy. You may feel a degree of trembling when you think of your sins, and of the punishment they have deserved; but yet not come unto the Lord Jesus Christ, by faith, that you may be saved in his appointed way. The heart of man is naturally evil: "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. 8: 7. It is utterly opposed to every truth on which a sinner's salvation depends. By vainly attempting to save yourself, and resting on your own efforts, you oppose Jesus Christ, you despise his great salvation, you neglect his offers of mercy, and throw contempt on the method God has himself appointed for the salvation of sinners. "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" Heb. 10: 29.

Rest, then, no longer in your own endeavors. If you wait till you make yourself fit to be saved, you will not, you cannot be saved at all. Listen to the gracious invitation of that God who knows the sinfulness and weakness of man, and rejoice that where sin abounded, grace did much more

abound: "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price!" Isa. 55 : 1.

The very circumstance which most magnifies the grace of God, namely, that he has offered salvation as a free and totally unmerited gift, appears an obstacle to ungrateful and unbelieving sinners. This arises from the pride and rebellion of the human heart. O come, fall before the throne of grace, confess your sinfulness, mourn over the perverseness of your own heart, and pray, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me." Ps. 51 : 10, 11. Thus humbly, and earnestly, and constantly pray that God the Holy Spirit would subdue your heart, remove your pride and self-dependence, enlighten your mind, and lead you by faith, which is "the gift of God," Eph. 2 : 8, to the Lord Jesus Christ for that mercy which you do not, which you cannot deserve, and without which you must perish.

Hear the kind and condescending words of the blessed Saviour: "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke 11 : 13. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3 : 16. You are, perhaps, partly depending on yourself, and partly on Jesus Christ. Know that he will not accept a divided heart. God addresses you: "My son, give me thy heart." Prov. 23 : 26. He is a jealous God, and will not suffer any rival to usurp his place. Mark the description which God gives of him-

self: "There is no God besides me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none besides me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." Isa. 45 : 21, 22.

The salvation of a sinner is, from beginning to end, of God. The great Redeemer says, "Without me ye can do nothing." John 15 : 5. And again, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." John 6 : 37. You cannot come to the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet lean to yourself. Resign, then, your heart wholly to him. Bow humbly before God, and exclaim, with holy Job, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee?" Job 40 : 4. "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42 : 6. Rejoice in the unmerited mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, and commit your soul entirely to his care; for he, and he alone, "is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Heb. 7 : 25. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Heb. 10 : 14. See also Heb. 7 : 26—28.

Perhaps you may be secretly saying to yourself, "I am too great a sinner to be pardoned; I will wait till I am more holy." This objection, though it appears in a different form, arises from the same source—a secret feeling that your own fitness will recommend you to God. Satan sometimes appears as a "roaring lion," and sometimes as "an angel of light;" either to terrify or to tempt the sinner from the Lord Jesus Christ. He cares not whether he can persuade you to think yourself too bad, or too good, so that you are prevented from believing on the only Saviour. Be not ignorant of his devices. Keep constantly in view these two objects: the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the "un-

searchable riches of Christ." Eph. 3 : 8. Despair of any thing from yourself, and look for every thing from Christ. Look to him as he is foretold in prophecy: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." Zech. 13 : 1. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22 : 17.

There are many other errors by which Satan, and ignorant people, and a deceitful heart, lead sinners astray, to their everlasting destruction. Some say, "I *have no time* to attend to religion: my family and my business occupy the whole of my time, and these must not be neglected. Because you fulfil one duty, this will not excuse your neglect of another; and especially of this "one thing needful"—the care of your never-dying soul. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mark 8 : 36, 37.

Others think, that if a dying person have time just to cry out, "*Lord, have mercy upon me!*" before he die, all will be well; but this idea has not the shadow of a foundation in the word of God.

Others imagine, that if a minister, or other Christian, *pray* with a sick person before death, and especially if the dying person *receive the sacrament*, these will make his peace with God, and prove a passport to heaven. But alas! to those who put their trust in these, the Saviour will say, "I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matt. 7 : 23.

Some excuse themselves by pleading *the example of superiors,* as justifying them. Just as well might a poor thief plead that he ought to be acquitted, because he saw a rich man commit the same crime; or had heard that some of his superiors had been guilty of murder. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Gal. 6 : 7, 8.

Some place a strong reliance on *dreams,* and the fancies of their minds; but these are commonly caused by disease, or by some natural cause, and surely cannot be any foundation for a sinner to rely on for the salvation of his soul.

Sometimes *relatives* will try to persuade sick persons that they have been very good, and that they need not fear. This is false kindness indeed; it is trifling with the soul of a sinner, when on the brink of destruction. O, dare not to trifle with the interests of an immortal soul! Warn your afflicted friend to flee "from the wrath to come," 1 Thess. 1 : 10, and to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," as the only and all-sufficient Saviour.

All the errors and excuses which have been stated, and many others that might be named, are so many refuges of lies, devised by Satan, the father of lies, to prevent poor, perishing sinners from believing on Christ. They are the result of that state of alienation from God in which man's heart lies by nature. He could not indulge one of these dangerous mistakes, or satisfy himself with any such miserable subterfuges, if he were not in a condition of mind most opposite to that of a child of God, the eyes of whose understanding have been opened by divine grace. Every such error proves that he enjoys none of the fruits of that

union with the Redeemer on which his salvation depends. His whole soul, with every bent of its affections, needs to be *turned from darkness unto light.* It is not merely his conclusions which are wrong: his mind is indisposed to right conclusions, for he is "dead in trespasses and sins." His state itself is wrong, which leads him into numberless errors of both head and heart. These very errors are the indisputable evidences of an unconverted mind, and will never be effectually corrected until that great change take place, by which all the powers of the understanding, as well as the inclinations of the heart, are submitted to the authority of God, through the love of Christ Jesus.

Pause, then, for a moment, and solemnly ask, Am I deceiving myself? Have I an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ? Am I indulging any sin in my heart? "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Ps. 139: 23, 24. Before the heart-searching God, every excuse is vain: you may deceive yourself, you may deceive others; but you cannot deceive God. O listen now to the voice of the merciful Saviour! "Hear, and your soul shall live." Isa. 55: 3. Now seek the aids of God the Holy Spirit. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16: 31. But, if you refuse the invitations of love and mercy, and still harden your heart, and die in this awful state, that same Saviour, who now beseeches you to be reconciled unto God, will hereafter address you, and all who have rejected him: "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in nowise believe, though a man declare it unto you." Acts 13: 41.

No. 163.

THE SABBATH-BREAKER RECLAIMED,

OR A PLEASING HISTORY OF

THOMAS BROWN.

On a fine Sabbath morn in the sweet month of May,
When the hawthorn in blossom was seen,
When perfumes fill'd the air, and all nature look'd gay,
And the fields wore a livery of green.

Thomas said to his wife, "The morning is fine,
Then let us walk out at our leisure;
I have work'd all the week, recreation we'll seek,
And the fields will afford us much pleasure."

Said his wife, "All our clothes are both dirty and torn,
Which will set decent people a talking;
I shall feel much asham'd, and we both shall be blam'd,
By those we may meet as we're walking."

"The birds and the cattle," says Thomas, "you know,
Dress all days alike, void of care;
Let us follow their plan, be as blithe as we can,
And not make things worse than they are."

"They can't well be worse, for at home or abroad
We've nothing for dinner to-day;
Our money's all gone, and credit we've none,
So e'en let us do as you say."

They lock'd up their house, and their children they took,
Unhappy at home or abroad;
And away they all went—'twas a Sabbath misspent—
For the chance of the fields or the road.

Not long they had walk'd, when a neighbor they met,
And they tried his attention to shun;
But he saw them so plain, to escape him was vain,
And thus to discourse he begun.

"Where have you been wand'ring about, Thomas Brown?
In your jacket so out of repair?"
"A rambling I've been o'er the meadow so green,
And I work in the jacket I wear."

"But do you not hear the church bell, Thomas Brown?
Oh! why not the Sabbath regard?"
"We a living must seek, and we work all the week,
If we can't enjoy Sunday, 'tis hard!"

"But what could your work do for you, Thomas Brown,
Were you not by your Maker befriended?"
"Why that I don't know; if to church we should go,
Perhaps matters would not be much mended."

"What I say I intend for your good, Thomas Brown,
And your friend am desirous to be!"
"Why, that I suppose, or your time you'd not lose
To discourse with a poor man like me."

"This world is fast hast'ning away, Thomas Brown,
And short are the pleasures of man;"
"Then there's no time to spare, let us drive away care,
And merrily live while we can."

"But what, when this world you shall leave, Thomas Brown,
If your soul in dread torments shall lie?"
"Why that, to be sure, would be hard to endure,
But I cannot well help it, not I."

"Yet the wretch under sentence of death, Thomas Brown,
Would be glad for a pardon to run!"
"Why, yes, so would I, if condemned to die;
But I know not what harm I have done."

"The Bible will tell you your sin, Thomas Brown,
And a Saviour will bring to your view;"
"The learn'd there may look, but I can't read the book;
It may, or it may not be true."

"Hie away to the church on the hill, Thomas Brown,
For if you can't read, you can hear."
"The man with the band I shall not understand;
The rich and the wise may go there."

"The Gospel is preach'd to the poor, Thomas Brown,
And would lighten your cares, do not doubt it."
"You speak like a friend, but I do not intend
To trouble myself much about it."

"Could I tell you where treasure is hid, Thomas Brown,
You would spare neither labor nor pains."
"In that you are right: I would dig day and night,
And merrily live on my gains."

"But what, should you gain the whole world, Thomas Brown,
And lose your own soul at the last?"
"Why, my courage would cool; I should then prove a fool,
And sorely repent of the past."

"Seek in time for the kingdom of God, Thomas Brown,
And your pleasures will never decay."
"I feel half inclin'd to become of your mind,
And I hope I shall do as you say."

"May the God of all peace give you grace, Thomas Brown,
In his fear and his favor to dwell."
"Your wish is most kind, I shall bear it in mind;
And so for the present farewell."

SECOND DIALOGUE.

SUNDAY MORNING.

"Whither go you, so clean and well clad, Thomas Brown,
For your jacket's a new one, I see."
"Sir, I go, with good-will, to the church on the hill,
To thank God for his goodness to me."

"To hear this, it does my heart good, Thomas Brown,
And I hope you'll continue to go."
"This, sir, I intend; and as you are my friend,
You'll be pleas'd something further to know.

When, after our converse, I first went to church,
I remember'd the days of my folly;
When I heard them at prayer, I thought God must be there,
And the place appear'd solemn and holy.

The prayers being over, then sweetly they sung:
I felt glad that I had gone in;
The sermon came next, and this was the text,
That 'death is the wages of sin.'

The minister told us, that all wicked men,
Who the paths of iniquity trod,
Would be turn'd into hell, in darkness to dwell,
And all people forgetting their God.

I listened awhile, and felt struck with fear,
A cloud seem'd to hang o'er my head;
A tear stood in my eye, and I could not tell why,
But my heart was as heavy as lead.

On the morrow I spoke of what I had heard,
While my shopmates were laughing and lazy,
And I should have said more, but they set up a roar,
And cried out, 'Tom Brown has gone crazy!'

Then I laugh'd and I sung with the best of them all,
And tried to forget what had pass'd;
But I thought in my mind, shall I good in this find,
If I lose my own soul at the last!

So again the next Sunday I went to the church,
Though my shopmates all join'd to upbraid;
For I thought, why should I fear a man that will die
More than Him by whom all things were made?

The minister spoke so loud and so plain,
That the poorest might well understand;
'Repent ye,' said he, and seem'd pointing at me,
'For the kingdom of God is at hand.'

I felt myself vile, as he told me my sins;
That he knew them, I could not well doubt it;
For it came in my head what to you I had said,
And I thought you had told all about it.

When I heard what my Saviour had suffer'd, I wept;
How he groan'd and he died on the tree;
But O, the blest hour! for the word came with power,
And I knew that he suffer'd for me.

Thus God has dealt with me, and thus has been pleas'd
His great goodness and grace to impart;
It was terror and dread that first bow'd down my head,
But 'twas mercy that melted my heart.

Every week from my wages a sixpence I spare,
A Bible to buy, for I need it;
And when time I can spare, to a friend I repair,
Who has promis'd to teach me to read it.

And you, sir, have been a most kind friend to me,
This I own, though I cannot repay;
But yet there is One who this kindness will own
At the last and the great judgment day.

For myself, as becomes a poor, weak, sinful man,
I will pray for support from on high,
To walk in God's ways, my Saviour to praise,
And to trust in his grace till I die.

And though poor, and unwise in the ways of the world,
I believe in the truth of God's word,
That *true riches* are they which will not pass away,
And *true wisdom*, the fear of the Lord."

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No. 164.

BETHEL;

OR,

THE FLAG UNFURLED.

BY REV. G. C. SMITH, OF PENZANCE.

FORMERLY A NAVAL OFFICER.

THE meetings for religious worship, on the river Thames, originated with A——, who was accustomed, when a boy, to visit the coal-ships in the port of London, his father being a coal-measurer. The Lord had rescued him from sin; and he had suffered so much under convictions, and received so little attention from Christians at that time, that he had determined to pity and help any one who appeared to him under serious impressions.

One day in 1814, while attending a Wesleyan chapel, he formed an acquaintance with the captain of the ship Friendship, whom he observed weeping under the sermon. This induced him to visit the ship; and finding the crew unemployed, he invited them into the cabin, and prayed with

them. He repeated his visit; and was soon requested to hold a similar meeting on board the Hammond. The work of God gradually advanced; many ships were added to the number for encouraging prayer; and it being winter, a lantern, hoisted at the main-topgallant-mast head, was fixed on as the signal to apprise the sailors what ship was agreed on for the night.

As the spring advanced, it was agreed that a blue flag should be made; the word Bethel in the centre, and a star in the corner rising in the east, in red; another flag with a dove bearing an olive-branch has since been added. This was first hoisted on the Lord's-day afternoon, on board the Zephyr, when the people assembled were more numerous than on any preceding occasion.

About this time, May, 1817, a friend, designated Onesiphorus, sent to the Religious Tract Society the following account:

"Having been informed that there was much good going forward among the sailors, as my business lies in the shipping, I determined, the first opportunity, to ascertain the truth of it. On Thursday afternoon, I had occasion to go down the river, and, in the midst of a number of Colliers, saw the signal, and rowed silently alongside. The quarter-deck was covered with an awning; one of the sailors was engaged in prayer, and, on his concluding, another immediately began. Their expressions of gratitude for mercies received, and sorrow on account of the depravity of their hearts; their humble trust in a crucified Jesus for salvation, and prayers for each other, that they might be kept from the evil of the world and all the temptations to which they were exposed, evidently showed that they had set their faces towards Zion. On the conclusion of the second prayer, they sung a hymn, one gave the benediction, and they began to separate.

"I immediately went upon deck, and said to the captain, I hoped he would excuse the intrusion of a stranger, who had been alongside a short time, and was happy to hear them so well, and, I hoped, so profitably engaged. He replied, there was no occasion for any apology, as they were all rejoiced when any one came from the shore to their meetings, for it encouraged and helped them on, and he begged I would come, the following evening, on board the H——; and added, 'If you could procure us some *Tracts*, we should be very much obliged—we are much in want of some, and they are the means of doing a deal of good.' *He told me there were seven ships in the trade, in which there was regular family devotion, every morning and evening, at sea and in harbor;* and he hoped much good would accrue from it. On leaving the ship, I promised, if possible, to be with them on Friday, and bring them some Tracts. I accordingly went, having a supply from the depository, and took Mrs. P. and my son with me. On delivering the parcel to Capt. W., he expressed his gratitude in such terms, that, if any of your Committee had been on board, I think it would have done their hearts good. The mate of the H—— told me, yesterday, that the people sat up on the half-deck till near midnight, reading them.

"At a quarter past seven, the people were all called on the quarter-deck, when the service began by singing a hymn, and then prayer, and so alternately till nine o'clock, when the meeting concluded. There were about thirty present, of whom about nine or ten led in prayer—two or three were captains, the others mates and seamen; and I do assure you, it is very long since I enjoyed such a pleasant opportunity. Their fervent prayers at the throne of grace for the '*strangers*, whom nothing but Christian love could have induced to come and visit poor sailors,' were truly affecting. The place was indeed a *Bethel*, and I think it could have been said by all present, 'It is good to be here.' Before

we left the ship, we had many more expressions of gratitude for the Tracts, and an unanimous wish, that we should repeat our visits, and also bring some pious friends with us."

This very gracious display of divine mercy to sailors was chiefly among the Colliers, in what is called the Lower Pool; and it was natural to suppose the sailors would flock on shore to hear the word of God. This was soon observed, in one meeting; and as the numbers became too great to be accommodated, a respectable and pious merchant at Rotherhithe determined on enlarging a room he had previously erected for a Sunday-school. This was done at a very considerable expense, which Mr. J. generously bore himself, from an earnest wish to benefit the souls of our brave seamen.

Prayer-meetings were established every Sabbath morning at seven o'clock, and preaching in the afternoon at half-past two, together with a weekly service on Wednesday evenings. All these means of grace have been well attended, and exceedingly profitable. Mr. J. being in connection with the Wesleyan Methodists, and occasionally preaching, he has deemed it right to meet the pious sailors in class, for Christian communion, and had at one time not less than fifty present, who appeared to enjoy the love of Christ shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto them: so mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.

It was not to be imagined that Satan would view with indifference such an assault on his kingdom as was now making by converted sailors. Persecution, therefore, the natural consequence of a revival in religion, raged furiously for a time. Owners forbade their captains allowing such meetings on board their ships. Ungodly captains and sailors poured forth the most dreadful oaths; even cabin-boys joined in throwing coals at those who were seriously disposed; and the watermen united in the general clamor

against this work of God. Sailors, to their utter astonishment, found, that when they called for damnation with every breath; when they wallowed in uncleanness, and pressed forward to destroy body and soul, then they were applauded; but now that they wished to seek the salvation of their souls, the comfort of their families, and the glory of God, they were accursed of men, and bitterly persecuted. The Lord their God graciously supported them. They have outlived those prejudices, weathered the storms, and compelled their enemies to confess that this is the work of God.

Two months after the visit of Onesiphorus, the writer arrived in London, and was informed of the Thames prayer-meetings; and an early evening was appointed when he should visit a ship, and witness the holy efforts of pious sailors. The vessel boarded on this occasion was the Zephyr. The writer, filled with astonishment at what he heard and saw, addressed the seamen, and, in a few days afterwards, preached to them on the deck of the Zephyr, to a crowded congregation. Determined to improve this pleasing gale of divine grace among English sailors, he announced a sermon to them at Poplar, and there publicly solicited a ship for another sermon, if any merchant or owner was present. The Agenoria was immediately offered him, and he preached on board of that ship to an immense multitude of sailors. A few weeks afterwards, he preached again on the deck of the John, Capt. B——, and invited the sailors to engage in prayer. These exertions produced in his mind the idea of a *floating chapel:* a plan in which Onesiphorus heartily joined, who united with the writer in transferring the scheme to the respectable and pious gentlemen who have so ably managed the business, and established the ark for the preaching of the Gospel on the river Thames. These particulars are presented much more in detail in a Tract called the "British Ark;" but are narrated here to preserve the connection of events. The prayer-

meetings continued to advance through 1818, and the writer again had the pleasure, in the summer of that year, to unite with the seamen on board the Zephyr and other ships, in the soul-reviving services. In June of this year, Onesiphorus made the following communication to the Religious Tract Society:

"A few days after receiving your last grant of Tracts, I visited all the vessels at the wharves, on the south side of the river, from London Bridge to Pickle Herring Stairs. The anxiety of the sailors to obtain Tracts was great; and one, in particular, said, that he took it *very kind* of me to bring the Tracts, and that he should read them with pleasure. I could not help remarking, with great satisfaction, after having left one tier of ships and gone to the next, when I looked back, and saw the men and boys, who had before been talking about some very idle, if not worse, matters, now differently engaged: two or three were seated on the windlass, two leaning against the capstan, some on the hatchways, and others in different parts of the vessels; all intent on reading Tracts; and not a word was to be heard. In each of the vessels I visited that evening, I spoke to them of the *floating chapel*, moored off the London docks, expressly for seamen, and urged them to go. Many promised they would. I have reason to think, from the respectable number of seamen who attend the *ark*, that my advice has been followed. May the number increase, till other *floating* places of worship are found necessary to contain them. I have had a great call for Tracts, to supply the seamen who attend worship on the river; and as we have new faces almost every Sabbath, a new distribution is constantly necessary.

"I have given many to sailors, on my way to a chapel, on the Sabbath, as it lies near the water-side. One young sailor, who was lounging about, I asked whether he went

to a place of worship. 'Sometimes, sir.' 'And why don't you go now, my lad; the church-bells are chiming, and it is a very bad plan to be idling in the streets, as, very frequently, young men get into bad company through it, and come to a bad end.' He said his clothes were not good enough. I replied, 'If you will not be ashamed to be seen in my company, I shall not be ashamed of yours; and as I am going to a place of worship, come along with me.' He immediately turned round, and followed me. I seated him in my pew, gave him a hymn-book; and he was so well pleased, that he came on the subsequent Sunday, brought one of his shipmates with him, and told me he should make a practice of attending in future, whenever he was in port.

"I am convinced, by this one instance, that, if serious Christians would, in an affectionate way, take these poor fellows by the hand, and use a little persuasion, the streets would, in a great measure, be cleared, and our places of worship better attended by seafaring men. I afterwards went on board the ship this young man belonged to, and distributed Tracts to all the ship's company.

"Last Monday I was invited to the prayer-meeting on board one of the Colliers, and was happy to find it held in the ship commanded by the captain who first set these meetings on foot; I had often heard of him with pleasure, but never before saw him. We had a most pleasant evening; many of the weather-beaten sailors prayed in a most fervent manner; and it is really good to be with them. After the meeting was concluded, I distributed some Tracts to them, and reserved a few for the captain, which he was very thankful for. He mentioned the following circumstance to me, which occurred last summer, while lying in the Thames, discharging his cargo. 'I was one morning very much annoyed as I was in bed, by three of the coal-heavers swearing at one another in the most horrid manner; I called

the mate, and asked him if he had got THE SWEARER'S PRAYER; he looked over a few Tracts I had in a drawer, and found one, the only one left. I dressed myself, and went on deck; laid hold of the one who swore most, and took him to the other end of the ship; made him call the other two men, and gave him the Tract, desiring him to read it to the others. He began, and at length got through it, but not without tears. He said, 'Capt. H——, do you think there can be *mercy* for *me?*' He repeated the question with great earnestness, crying all the time. 'I told him,' said Capt. H——, 'that there was mercy for the vilest sinner that repented and fled to the blood of Christ.' The man replied, 'Then there is hope, and I will seek after it, and trust I shall never more be guilty of such sins.' "

Thus the work of the Lord proceeded rapidly among the sailors, and many pious friends were raised up to encourage it. The writer's attention, this summer, was chiefly directed to the Ark, and as this vessel was crowded on the Sabbath mornings, he usually invited three or four pious seamen to engage in prayer. Many hundreds from the shore will long remember those delightful seasons. Some striking expressions used by the seamen at this time, have produced the most powerful impressions on unregenerate landsmen.

We had long thought of the vessels that lie between London bridge and the Ark; and as no prayer-meetings had been held in this part of the river, it was particularly desirable that an attempt should be made to establish them here. The prayer-meetings had hitherto been confined to the Lower Pool, among the sailors. Impressed with the importance of such meetings in the Upper Pool, Onesiphorus one day hinted this to a captain from Hull, whose vessel lay at Chamberlain's wharf, close to London bridge; an evening was appointed, and the writer was to open the meeting with an address on board his ship, the Ocean,

Capt. F——. The winter was approaching, the days soon closed, and two lanterns were therefore hoisted, as a signal, at the main-topgallant-mast head. The writer coming down Fish-street hill, beheld the lanterns, and standing on London bridge, indulged the following train of thought.

A signal for prayer! How strange! I have seen almost every signal usually made, in the merchant service and the navy, but none like this. As signal officer, I have been accustomed to make, to repeat, and to answer signals, night and day, in calms, or storms, or fogs, or battles; I have in consequence witnessed signals to weigh, to moor, to form in line, to chase, to board, and to hear prayers read, but never until this moment did I behold a signal, close to London bridge, for sailors to assemble and pray themselves.

A signal for prayer! How unexpected! What, English sailors pray! The river Thames exhibit a standard for God! Is it possible that sailors, who have been proverbial for drunkenness, blasphemy, impurity, and desperate wickedness—that they should be eminent for social prayer and personal piety? Alas, English sailors have long been given up by many good men, as abandoned of God to work all uncleanness with greediness. They have literally been led captive by the devil, at his will. The Thames, with very few exceptions, has been under the dominion of the god of this world. Every week its thousands of depraved mariners have rushed on shore, and like a swarm of locusts from the bottomless pit, filled the public-houses and brothels on the banks, contaminating the very atmosphere with their polluted breath, and impiously defying the terrors of death, of judgment, and of hell. Sin has abounded. Satan has reigned. Hell has triumphed. Millions have been damned. Is the period now arrived when He, who led captivity captive, and received gifts for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them, should reign among sailors? Is almighty grace now to superabound? Sin has risen to the banks of

the Thames, in a dreadful flood. Is eternal mercy now to overflow the banks, and grace reign among sailors through righteousness unto eternal life? Wondrous thought! surely the Son of God again condescends to visit this sea of Galilee, and pluck these as brands from the burning, that they may be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

A signal for prayer! What an example for London Christians! Sailors have been bold for sin, they are now bold for righteousness; they were not ashamed of Satan as their master, and now they blush not to avow Christ as their Redeemer. His "ensign" shall be raised, and his signals made, until he draws all men unto him. Christians, examine your prayer-meetings, how thinly attended, how dull the service, how heavy and long the prayers! *Say you, a little more sleep, a little more slumber?* No, arouse from your supineness and lethargy, go to the Ark—go to the Thames, board the ship of prayer, and there learn how "the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force."

A signal for prayer! How cheering to my heart! Blessed God! I'll hasten on board, and mingle my tears, and prayers, and praises, with my brother seamen. Ah, Lord, long, very long have I been a poor wanderer from thee. Preserved in the storm, defended in the battle, and yet I knew thee not. Well, thou hast brought me up at last in safe anchorage; my anchor's cast within the veil. "The fair havens" are full in prospect, and eternity like a vast ocean rolls before me. Oh grant, God of all my mercies, ere I launch forth into that fathomless abyss, grant, I beseech thee, that the unworthiest of all thy creatures may be made useful to sailors.

The tears stole down the cheeks of the writer as he closed this ejaculatory address, and he hastened on board to use the means in which the blessing might be found.

The night being very dark and wet, the meeting was held in the cabin of the Ocean. It was quite full, and sev-

eral sailors stowed themselves away on the half-deck. This meeting was followed by several more in the Upper Pool; and repeated assemblies for prayer on the decks, or in the cabins of different ships, produced both discovery and union. Several pious captains and sailors were discovered, and all were united in the grand object of benefiting the souls of sailors in general.

We could insert a long list of ships, on board of which prayer-meetings have since been held in the Upper Pool, and detail many highly interesting facts; but even this is not to be considered as a specimen of the Lower Pool, where prayer-meetings have been held in seven or nine ships in one night, in each of which many sailors have attended, and several prayed. Lanterns have been seen from tier to tier as signals, and the lower part of the Thames has exhibited the most extraordinary appearance.

It is worthy of remark how graciously the Lord has helped forward this work. It is now established in both Pools, and though ships are continually going and returning, either coasting or foreign, yet the friends of those prayer-meetings, who live on shore, are never at a loss for a ship. There are always a few in harbor on whom they can constantly depend; but they usually inquire after the meetings, "Is there any captain present who will lend us his ship for to-morrow night?" If no one offers, they give notice of a ship they know they can have, and the flag is hoisted on board of her at nine o'clock next day. A number of sailors and cabin-boys have been truly awakened at those meetings, and the good that has been done is incalculable. In March, 1817, Screw Bay, a most abandoned neighborhood in the High-street of Rotherhithe, was fixed on as a place suitable for prayer-meetings on shore. Many of the sailors attended the Methodist Chapel on Sabbath evenings, and at half past seven, when it closed, they went to this bay; and under the direction of A——, who had

borrowed a room here, they poured out their souls to God for the guilty inhabitants. The same plan was adopted here as on board; that is, at the close of the meeting, they inquired, "Is there any neighbor here who will lend a room for next Sabbath evening?" By such methods and by the distribution of Tracts, the very worst houses have been obtained, doors and windows thrown open, and the most depraved sinners driven to their Bibles, by the prayers of six or seven converted sailors, every Sabbath evening. At first, great persecution followed, but now all is tranquil, many have become serious, numbers attend meetings at seven o'clock, and shameless immorality is suppressed. Some watermen, who were at first most opposed, have now opened their houses for these meetings.

In addition to this we have to report that some captains have had Bethel flags made and taken to sea with them, and as the signal is pretty well known among sailors, those captains, when obliged to anchor in a roadstead or bay, generally hoist the signal for prayer in the evening, and as many sailors as choose go on board.

It must be obvious, to every enlightened mind, that this is a plan that promises the utmost usefulness throughout the world, in proportion as the number and zeal of praying captains increase.

The writer had always viewed the floating chapel like a place of worship in a town surrounded with villages; and as he considered it his duty to advocate itinerant exertions to every village and cottage of the kingdom, that the people might be induced to attend the worship of God in town, so it appeared equally important that a system of itinerant preaching should be adopted from ship to ship, that sailors might be drawn to attend the Ark, and such places of worship as would gladly receive them. Upon this principle he has preached in a very large number of ships.

Immediately after the sermon in each ship, the preacher

has invited half a dozen seamen to engage in prayer; they have cheerfully complied, with such fervor, humility, and holy importunity, as he scarcely ever remembers to have seen, excepting on similar occasions. These services have usually been held on a *very crowded deck* of a vessel lying in a tier of ships, an awning overhead, sailors and landsmen from the shore intermixed.

A few sentences, uttered in the honest simplicity of their hearts, may not be unacceptable.

The master of the Hannah "rejoiced that he had lived to see the day when this ship became the house of God, and had the Gospel preached to so large an assembly on her decks."

A captain observed, "Lord, thou knowest we sailors have long been a disgrace to our country; O that we may now become an ornament to the religion of Jesus Christ, wherever we land."

A sailor cried, "Lord, six and twenty years ago I was a poor cabin-boy in this ship. Ah, what a race of iniquity I have since run! What has God done for me! O Lord, it is all of thy grace; thou hast saved me from hell, and brought me among my brethren to hear thy word. Bless me, even me, O Lord; and O bless the lad that now occupies the station thy poor worm filled six and twenty years ago."

Another said, "O Lord, what great things thou hast done for us poor sailors, thou hast changed the drunkard's song to a hymn of praise, and the blasphemer's language into humble prayer; surely, Lord, we ought to love thee."

Another said, "Lord, how often have we poor sailors been at our wit's end, and knew not what to do! Lord, thou hast made the sea a calm, and brought us to our desired haven; O what can we vile rebels say unto thee, O Lord? Voyage after voyage we are preserved; and yet, Lord, what sinners we are. O make us more holy and more zealous."

Another said, "Lord, how greatly our hearts rejoice to see what is going forward on the Thames; surely, thou hast taken possession of the strong holds of Satan. Here reign triumphant, blessed Jesus, until every sailor submits to thine authority."

Another said, "O Lord, grant that the time may soon come when we shall no longer have to go from tier to tier, and say, Know ye the Lord; but, when every captain, mate, cook, carpenter, sailor, and cabin-boy shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest."

Another prayed, "Lord, we rejoice to see the Bethel flag flying on the Thames; O may it never be struck, but may it fly to invite sailors to prayer in every roadstead, or bay, or harbor, when we come to an anchor. Lord, we have been champions for the devil, O make us champions for Christ. Let our example shine, that wicked captains and sailors may be constrained to say, The Lord is with them."

Another said, "The sea has again confessed thy power, and brought us back, after a long voyage, to join our brethren in prayer on the Thames. Ah, Lord, how many dangers have we escaped! Surely, thou art the God of the sea as well as of the land: salvation is of thee, O Lord."

Another said, "Lord, how is it that thou shouldst come on board our ship and bless poor sailors. O Lord, we feel, we know that thou art here; and though we are not worthy that thou shouldst come on board to sup with us, yet we will not, we cannot let thee go except thou bless us."

Another said, "O Lord, how often have the waves rolled, and the winds blew, and all hope that we could be saved was taken away; then we cried unto thee, O Lord. In our distress, we said, Lord, save us or we perish: and, ah, blessed Jesus, thou hast rebuked the wind, and said, Peace, be still; and there was a great calm, and we are the living, the living to praise thee as it is this day."

Another said, "Lord, what a wonder it is that thou

shouldst put it into the hearts of people from shore to think of poor wicked sailors, and come off to our ships, and pray with us. Lord, bless these dear people from the shore; and, O Lord, when they are lying comfortably in their warm beds on shore, and we are out at sea, by night, tossed with the tempest, and at our wit's end, Lord, grant these dear people may think of poor sailors, and pray for them."

Another said, "Lord, we sailors have spread much evil, and brought a reproach on our country, by our wicked conduct in foreign lands: now, Lord, be pleased to grant that we may all become missionaries for Christ in every port; and may we prove to foreigners, that God can and will bless sailors, and make the vilest enemies of his cross become the most zealous friends to his glorious cause."

A captain said, "Lord, we have heard to-night that if a man has been to sea he will ever after love sailors, and if his heart is changed by thy grace he will love to do good for sailors; O Lord, thou knowest that if he does not he is not worthy the name of a sailor. Lord, thou knowest how we love to see sailors coming to Christ; O Lord, increase the number; we rejoice that ever the Bethel flag was unfurled, and we pray that there may be ten flags flying every night in the upper pool, and double the number in the lower, because there are more ships." This was expressed with astonishing fervor and simplicity.

A captain remarked, "Lord! it is good for us to meet on board our ship for prayer. O bless these poor sailors! *We* know *thee* to be a prayer-hearing God! Lord, go with those of our brethren who are about to sail. Be thou their pilot, their chart, their anchor, and their desired haven."

A sailor prayed, "O Lord, pity me; I have been a great rebel! Lord, thou hast broken my hard heart! the lion is a lamb! Lord, who would ever have thought that I should love prayer! O save my brother sailors! Lord make them thy servants!"

A captain said, "We thank thee, O God, in our old age, that we see such a work as this going forward among sailors. Surely, thou art doing great things for them! Some of us have been more than forty years tossed on the ocean, and preserved by thee. We, O Lord, can tell of thy goodness. O bless every vessel out at sea; and every coaster steering for this river."

Another captain said, "Lord, how wonderful it is that thou shouldst have mercy on us wicked sailors, who have been the offscourings of all things. Surely thou hast, by thine almighty arm, brought back to thy fold those who had been driven away in the dark and cloudy day of human apostasy." He then poured forth his soul with uncommon earnestness for the brethren who were now in prayer at the lower pool.

A ship-carpenter expressed his astonishment "that such a set of poor, ignorant, wicked men should be brought together in this manner. Rejoicing in the love of Christ Jesus; and looking in hope of eternal life through him." The ardent cries they sent up to heaven for the writer were of a nature too affectionate and flattering to be repeated, but too pious and earnest ever to be forgotten.

The writer cannot, as a seaman and a Christian, but rejoice in this great work of the Lord among British seamen; he anticipates the most glorious results to the commerce, the character, and the usefulness of his country; and prays that the same blessings may be extended to seamen and landsmen in every nation of the globe.

No. 165.

TRUE AND FALSE

CONVERSIONS DISTINGUISHED.

Let the reader lay it to heart, that deception in respect to our religious experience *is possible*. The apostle intimates, that a man may think himself to be something, when he is nothing, and so deceive himself. Gal. 6 : 3. He cannot deceive God, but *himself* he may deceive; for "the heart is deceitful above all things." It is said in the Scripture, that "the hope of the hypocrite shall perish;" which supposes that some hypocrites are self-deceived, else they would have no hope to lose. Five of the ten virgins had lamps without oil; that is, they had hopes and profession without grace. In the parable of the sower, the seed which fell on stony places, and which sprang up without taking any root, represents a defective conversion. The joy with which the word is said to have been received, bespeaks a hope of pardon; but it was a hope without foundation.

From the Scriptures we learn, that there are those who trust in themselves that they are righteous—and, from a conceit of their own superior goodness, despise others—who, nevertheless, will in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes"—i. e., in their own conceit, they are renewed men—"and yet is not washed from their filthiness." Prov. 30 : 12. Let me entreat you, my dear reader, to let this thought be fixed deep in your mind—that you *may be* deceived about the state of your own heart. I do not say that you are

deceived, but it is a possible case: therefore examine yourself whether you be in the faith.

To be deceived with a false hope, as it is possible, so it is very *dreadful*. It is a deception which will prove ruinous to those who are laboring under it. It proved ruinous to the five foolish virgins, who seem to have supposed, all the while that the bridegroom tarried, that they had oil in their vessels. They did not therefore think of applying for oil, until the coming of the bridegroom made their destitute state manifest.

The whole of our fallen race are divided into two widely different classes, by the separating line of the *new birth*. Those who are on the one side of this line are the friends of God, and those on the other side are his enemies: those who are on the one side, are in the narrow way which leads to life; while those on the other side are in the broad way which leads to hell. Now, what a dreadful mistake it must be, for those who are on the wrong side of this separating line, to fancy themselves to be on the right side, and in the path to life, when there is but a step between them and eternal death. And there is no hope of their being turned out of this perilous road into the path of life, unless they can be convinced of the worthlessness of their religion. To effect this is no easy thing; for their false religion is entirely to their taste. They have chosen their own delusions. Had the man who is deceived the same jealousy of his own heart which the true convert has, there would be hope that he would find out his mistake. But it is not so; for, while he is "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," he fancies that he is "rich, and increased in goods, and has need of nothing."

I have reason to expect, from the light of God's word, that those who are most dreadfully deceived, will be the least apt to suspect themselves. As means to prevent being deceived in respect to their conversion, let my readers attend to the following directions.

1. Do not rest in the good opinion which *others enter-*

tain of your conversion. "Let every man prove *his own work;* then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." Another cannot know with certainty that your heart is right with God. There is none but the Searcher of hearts, and yourself, that can know with certainty the state of your heart. After Peter had called Silvanus, who was an eminent Christian minister, a *faithful* brother, he adds this qualifying clause, "*as I suppose.*" By this we are taught, that even an apostle did not pretend to know the hearts of others with an infallible certainty. If all the ministers, and all the Christians in the world, were to tell you that your conversion might be relied on, it would be unsafe and wrong to give an implicit credit to their opinion. If your conversion be indeed genuine, you will not rely on the judgment of others; you will prove your own work, and you will keep proving it.

2. It will be unsafe to judge of the goodness of your religion by *its agreement with that of other men.* They who, in these interesting concerns, "measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves amongst themselves, are not wise." 2 Cor. 10:12. We may suppose this to be the way in which the stony-ground hearers made trial of their conversions: One heard another relate his experiences, and they agreed with his own; and this led him to conclude that his own experiences were good, because they were so perfectly similar to his neighbor's. It is true, they were *similar:* but what did this avail, seeing their similarity consisted in their being shallow experiences, having no root to support them? I fear that thousands, and ten thousands are deceived, and for ever ruined in this way. And in this way we are more eminently exposed to be deceived, in those seasons of merciful visitation, when great numbers are religiously affected at the same time. At such times there are often many who entertain a confident hope of their regeneration, who have brought their feelings and views to no higher standard than to that of the experiences which they have heard related by their neighbors.

It is an affecting thought, that there should be such multitudes under the light of God's holy word, who are full of hopes of heaven merely because *they* have felt as *others* have felt—they have had such distress of mind as they have heard others tell of, and they have been filled with such joys as others have experienced. But this is no sufficient evidence of a gracious state; for multitudes may "receive the word anon with joy," even with the same kind and degree of joy, and yet none of them have any root in themselves. Matt. 13 : 5, 6, 20, 21.

3. The only sure means to prevent fatal deception in this matter is, to try all our experiences by that infallible standard, *the word of God*. This is like silver seven times purified. It is everlasting truth. It will determine what is right, and what is wrong in our opinions, experiences, and practices. "The *word* which I speak unto you," said the Saviour, "the same shall judge you in the last day." By the help of God's word, we may anticipate the judgment of the great day, as it relates to ourselves. If we have evidence that we now possess the religion approved by the Bible, we have just so much evidence that our religion will stand the test of the great day; for Bible religion, and no other, will meet the approbation of the Judge.

You cannot know, with infallible certainty, that your most religious neighbor is a real saint; but you know, with the same infallible certainty with which you know the truth of God's word, that Abraham, David, Paul, Peter, John, and many others, were real saints. Therefore, you may know, that if you have the same religious experiences which they had, your religion will bear the inspection of the great day. You are assured that Jesus Christ always did those things which pleased his Father; if, therefore, you have the spirit of Christ, and follow in his steps, you are in the path of life.

The Bible is all of it calculated to teach us the nature and effects of true religion. When it exhibits the holiness of God, we are not only presented with the great *object* of

love, but also with the *pattern* for our imitation. All who are born of God resemble their Father, for they are "partakers of the divine nature." In God's law we also learn what true religion is. The law which says, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself, is true religion in *requirement*. When this law is written upon the heart, as it is by regenerating grace, then there is true religion in *experience*.

What, my reader, have been your views of *sin*, and of your own sinful character in particular? The Holy Spirit reproves, or convinces of sin. Those who are saved are all convinced of sin. The commandment comes, and sin revives in their view; they now *see* what they before *heard*, viz. that they are *sinners*. Now they *know* every man the plague of his own heart. The want of this previous conviction of depravity, is probably intimated by the premature growth of the seed which fell on stony places. It is represented as springing up too soon. There had been an alarm, but no deep conviction of sin. There is nothing more clearly revealed in the Bible, than the entire sinfulness of man's heart, and its total opposition to God. Natural men are called the *enemies* of God, and *haters* of God; and this is said concerning them all, without exception. See Rom. 1 : 30 ; 5 : 10 ; 8 : 7.

I do not know into the hands of what particular persons these pages will fall ; but this I know, that they will fall into the hands of none but those who either are, or have been *enemies* to God. And now, reader, let me ask, Have you been made sensible of this enmity? If you have been renewed, you have undoubtedly seen that the whole of your unrenewed heart was contrary to God. This sight, given by the illumination of the Spirit, has led you to loathe yourself in your own eyes. The repentance which needeth not to be repented of, is a *godly* sorrow for sin. It is such a hatred of sin as the holy God possesses. If you have any godly sorrow for sin, you weep, not merely for the sake of being forgiven, but because you have sinned. You

would sorrow if you thought you should never be forgiven; and you will not cease from sorrowing, when you have evidence that you are forgiven.

Much of the evidence of the genuineness of our experience depends on our *growing conviction* of the evil of sin, and of the sinfulness of our own hearts in particular. As the holy influence of religion widens in the soul, sin will be proportionably hated. This is the reason why eminent Scripture saints appear to be most deeply affected with their remaining depravity. See Job 42: 1–6, and Rom. 7: 24. What saint in his day was superior to Job, and what Christian was ever more sanctified than Paul; and yet who ever appeared more vile in their own sight, or more burdened with sin than they? The man whose heart is changed, departs from iniquity; he watches and prays, and strives against it; but still he cries out, "Behold I am vile!" "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

It is the work of the Spirit, not only to convince of sin, but also of *righteousness*. John 16: 8. Those who are truly taught by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, are first convinced that they are sinners, deserving evil, and nothing but evil, at the hand of God. They see that the tears of repentance do not atone for their sins. They see that no works of righteousness which they can do, will satisfy divine justice. The penitent is convinced that God is righteous; that the law is righteous; and that God must do nothing to cloud the evidence of his righteousness, or diminish respect for his law. This prepares his mind to be greatly delighted with the atonement of Christ. Here he sees justice and mercy met together. The righteousness of God declared, the law honored, sin condemned, and the sinner pardoned. Reader, has the Father drawn you to the Son; and have you, through the Son, come to the Father? Is Christ, the Lord, *your righteousness* and strength? Have you discovered an entire distinction between going about to establish your own righteousness, and submitting yourself

to this righteousness of God? Love to God exists in every renewed heart; and this is no modification of selfishness; it is a *disinterested* affection. If all we do in the service of God, be done solely with reference to ourselves, it is wholly unacceptable. If he be not delighted in, as a great, holy, and glorious being, we have in reality no interest in his favor.

The limits of these pages do not allow a full discussion of the subject; but I cannot refrain from affectionately cautioning every one, into whose hands this treatise may fall, to be on his guard against a religion of his *own devising*, and against depending on those, as evidences of grace, which are of *mere human invention*.

One man thinks he has experienced a change of heart, because he has had a remarkable *dream*. Another has seen a wonderful *light;* another has had a *vision* of the Saviour; another has heard a *voice* speaking to him; and another has had a *Scripture promise* immediately and unexpectedly suggested to his mind: like this, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." Many are confident that they are converted, when they have no other evidence of it but such things as these. But where, I would ask, in all the word of God, are they taught that these are evidences of conversion? I know that, in the days of old, the Most High made revelations of his will by dreams, by visions, and by audible sounds; but these revelations are not now to be expected; nor were they then confined to his sanctified ones. The king of Egypt, and his chief butler and baker, had divine communications made to them in dreams, but this did not prove them to be any thing more than mere natural men. Balaam had visions of the Almighty; but he was a sinner still. These are never mentioned in the Bible as the things by which the men of grace obtain evidence of their gracious state.

Carefully examine the experiences of the man after God's own heart, as they are contained in the book of Psalms, and you will find no *dreaming* experiences. His love to God's word on account of its purity, his delight in

divine ordinances, and his respect unto all the commandments, are *his* evidences. Read Christ's sermon on the mount; it is a searching portion of Scripture. The religion which it inculcates must be *felt* and *practised* by us, or we are on the sand, and our building will fall. But what is the religion of the sermon on the mount? It is poorness of spirit, mourning for sin, hungering for righteousness, shining as lights in the world, loving and forgiving enemies, praying and giving alms, not from a spirit of ostentation, but from a spirit of devotion, a spirit of benevolence. This is a specimen of the religion taught in that noted sermon; yea, in all Christ's sermons. But there is not the least intimation that dreams and visionary appearances constitute any part of the religion of those whom the Saviour will own as his disciples. It is not intimated in any of the discourses of Christ, that if a man has a text of Scripture which contains a promise, suggested to his mind, or whispered in his ear, or spoken in the air over his head, this proves him to be born of God.

How then, I would ask, comes it about, that so much dependence is placed on these things? Christ has furnished us with a great variety of evidences of grace. These are overlooked, and evidences of our own making, or of mere human invention, are depended on. What folly can exceed this? To call strips of common paper bank-notes, and sell our houses and lands for them, would not be folly comparable to it. There *is* religion, which is solid and substantial; which "changes all the heart," and makes it the residence of the sweet graces of the Spirit, and the principle of holy action. What is chaff to the wheat? What are dreams, and visions, in comparison to such religion as this? See 1 Cor. 13 : 1–7.

Satan practices his wiles in respect to conversion with astonishing success. Some of those wiles—as I am led to view them—have fallen within my own observation.

A man advanced in life, who had obtained a hope thirty years before, told me his experience, which was in substance

as follows: One night he was in great distress about his soul, so that when he turned over in his bed, it seemed to him like turning over in hell. Soon after this, he thought he saw a light come down through the roof, which rested upon his breast. When the cock crew, he thought it was the sweetest sound which he had ever heard. When he arose in the morning, the face of things was altered; for it seemed to him that every thing was praising God. I inquired of him for the fruits of this change, which had been of so long standing. I could not learn that he had ever had any stated worship in the family or closet; or that he made any conscience of sanctifying the Sabbath, even so much as to feel himself obliged to refrain from labor. Indeed, he appeared to be a total stranger to all the fruits of the Spirit. And yet, what is painful to relate, he seemed to have no doubt of the genuineness of his conversion; and could not be made to call it in question. Perhaps you may wish to ask me how I account for the new face which nature wore the morning after he saw that light; and how I account for the new language which it seemed to him to speak, even praise to God. I answer, The visionary light removed his fears, and excited a full belief that God had delivered him from his state of condemnation. This was enough to make him feel very glad, very happy; and to cause him for a while to abound in giving thanks to God. In this particular there was a resemblance of a true conversion; but still it is easy to account for it on the principles of mere selfishness; and what went before, and what followed these joyful feelings, are enough to convince us that they could not be that joy in the Holy Ghost which is peculiar to true converts.

I will now turn your attention to the case of a woman, who gave me an account of a hope on which she had relied for the term of eighteen years; which, for substance, is as follows: "About that time," said she, "I lost a sister. This excited great distress in my mind, as I viewed myself unprepared for eternity. *Eternity* was an awful thought to

me. The word kept ringing in my ears. One day, while I was thus distressed with the thoughts of eternity, as I threw myself on the bed, something seemed to say to me, 'Eternity is none too long to enjoy God and Christ.' This afforded me immediate relief." She, like a person drowning, caught at this straw, and on it she hung for eighteen years, when a merciful God was pleased to open her eyes to see that it was nothing but a straw. Do you ask me wherein this experience appears to be fallacious? I answer, first, that there is no Scripture in favor of such an experience. I would add, that the experience appears to be wholly of the selfish kind. What preceded her relief was not conviction of sin; it was nothing but terror. And her comfort did not arise from beholding the glory of the Lord, or any thing of the kind; but merely from a belief that the eternity which she had dreaded would not be spent in misery, but in happiness. The holy enjoyments of heaven were not, as I could learn, taken into the account.

I am well acquainted with a man, who, when he was awake, being in distress of mind, thought he saw Christ reach down his arms to raise him up out of the gulf into which he fancied he was sinking. This he related to me soon after it took place, expecting that he should give me that joy which is occasioned by the repentance of a sinner. But the relation of it led me to make a new effort, in dependence on divine help, to rescue him from the snare of the devil. The Lord was merciful: a new and different experience succeeded, which produced a lasting conviction in the mind of the man, that the visionary discovery of Christ reaching down his arms was not of the nature of a Christian experience.

I heard a young woman give a reason of her hope, who seemed to lay the greatest stress on this: that she awaked one morning with these words sounding in her ears: *Daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.* In this there were three things, which probably had influence in leading her to hope. 1. That the words contained a

cheering promise, which, being appropriated to her own case, implied that her sins were forgiven. 2. These words came to her mind unexpectedly, and without any pains being taken on her part, which was probably one thing that led her to think they were sent as a direct message from God. 3. The words gave the more consolation, as they were conceived to be the words of Scripture. To me, however, none of these reasons are sufficient to prove her conversion to be sound and saving. The devil knows *Scripture*, and can quote it. He can quote a *promise*, and can bring it *suddenly and unexpectedly* to the mind. For proof of all this, let me refer you to Matt. 4 : 6. The Spirit of God makes us love the Scriptures because they are "*Holy Scriptures*," and the promises, because they are holy, and because by them we are made partakers of the divine nature; but the devil seeks to comfort, with the promises, those whose hearts are not changed, and who have no preparation to be pleased with the promises of God's word, except by a selfish application of them. A sinner dreads eternal punishment, and therefore will be pleased with the promise of the forgiveness of sins, when he merely contemplates this as an escape from that punishment.

Satan is said to be transformed into an angel of light. It is his work to deceive and beguile, and thus to destroy souls. The several cases which I have stated, to me appear like the work of the Deceiver. If the relation of them should be the honored means of breaking up or preventing *one false hope*, I shall not have cause to regret that I have put them on paper.

I beseech my reader not to lose his soul by such amazing folly as that of *turning his back on the marks of grace laid down in the Scriptures*, and trusting to those which have no scriptural foundation. Will you not now resolve, that you will collect together all that in which you have trusted, and put it into the balance of the sanctuary, and see whether it has any real weight? If I saw you selling your estate for those worthless strips of paper of which I

spoke, I would caution you against doing so foolish a thing; but when I see you about to lose your soul by mistaking the wiles of the devil for Christian experiences, I know not how to hold my peace. The command of God is, *to look diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God.* Those who are set to watch for souls, should watch "as they that must give account."

My reader will bear with me while I add one more caution. Do not confine yourself to *one particular mark* of grace. If your conversion be the work of the Spirit, you will have *all* the marks of grace. One who is born of God, however feeble his strength, has all the members of a living and proper child. If you love the brethren with complacence, you will love enemies with good will. If you love God whom you have not seen, you will love your brother whom you have seen. If your zeal is the fruit of the Spirit, you will, by the operation of the same Spirit, be also clothed with humility. If God prepare your heart to pray, he will also prepare you to every good word and work. And if he begin a good work in you, he will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. If, therefore, you do not "endure to the end," you lack an essential mark of a gracious state. Yea, I may add, if your conversion is the work of God's Holy Spirit, your religion will not be *stationary;* it will *advance.* You will go from strength to strength, until you appear before God in Zion.

This paper may fall into the hands of some who are not ignorant of Satan's devices. The prayers of such I would request in its behalf, that it may be the happy means of delivering precious souls from the snare of the fowler. Pray, my Christian friends, that this subtle deceiver, who has filled Christendom with his false and delusive conversions, may soon be chained, and not be suffered any longer to practise his successful wiles.

No. 166.

CHRIST THE ONLY REFUGE

FROM

THE WRATH TO COME.

BY REV. JAMES HERVEY.

Give me leave to relate an uncommon incident, which happened a little while ago in this neighborhood, and of which I myself was a spectator. The day was the Sabbath; the place appropriated to divine worship was the scene of this remarkable affair.

A boy came running into the church, breathless and trembling. He told, but in a low voice, those who stood near, that a press-gang was advancing to besiege the door, and arrest the sailors. An alarm was immediately taken. The seamen, with much hurry, and no small anxiety, began to shift for themselves. The rest of the congregation, perceiving an unusual stir, were struck with surprise—a whisper of inquiry ran from seat to seat, which increased by degrees into a confused murmur. No one could inform his neighbor; therefore every one was left to guess what had happened, from the suggestions of a timorous imagination. Some suspected the town was on fire. Some were apprehensive of an invasion from the Spaniards. Others looked up, and looked round, to see if the walls were not giving way, and the roof falling upon their heads. In a few moments the consternation became general. The men stood like statues, in silent amazement and unavailing perplexity. The women shrieked aloud, and fell into fits. Nothing was seen but wild disorder; nothing heard but tumultuous clamor. The preacher's voice was drowned. Had he spoken in thunder his message would scarcely have been regarded. To have gone on with his work, amidst such a prodigious

ferment, had been like arguing with a whirlwind, or talking to a tempest.

This brought to my mind that great, *tremendous day*, when the heavens will pass away, when the earth will be dissolved, and all its inhabitants receive their final doom. If, at such incidents of so much less consequence, our hearts are ready to fail, what unknown and inconceivable astonishment must seize the guilty conscience when the hand of the Almighty shall open those unparalleled scenes of wonder, desolation, and horror! when the trumpet shall sound—the dead arise—the world be in flames—the Judge on the throne—and all mankind at the bar!

"*The trumpet shall sound*," 1 Cor. 15 : 52, says the prophetic teacher; and how startling, how stupendous the summons! Nothing equal to it, nothing like it, was ever heard through all the regions of the universe, and all the revolutions of time. When conflicting armies have discharged the bellowing artillery of war, or when victorious armies have shouted for joy of the conquest, the seas and shores have rung, the mountains and plains have echoed. But the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, will resound from pole to pole. They will shake the pillars of heaven, and startle the dungeon of hell. They will penetrate the deepest recesses of the tomb. They will pour their amazing thunder into all those abodes of silence. The dead, the very dead, shall hear.

When the trumpet has sounded, *the dead shall arise*. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," the graves open; the monumental piles are cleft asunder; and the nations under ground start into day. What an immense harvest of men and women, springing up from the caverns of the earth, and the depths of the sea! Stand awhile, my soul, and consider the wonderful spectacle. Adam, formed in Paradise, and the babe, born but yesterday; the earliest ages, and latest generations, meet upon the same level. Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barba-

rians, people of all climes and languages, unite in the promiscuous throng. Here those vast armies, which, like swarms of locusts, covered countries; which, with an irresistible sweep, overran empires: here they all appear, and here they are lost; lost, like the small drop of a bucket when plunged into the unfathomable and boundless ocean. Oh, the multitudes! the multitudes! which these eyes shall survey when God "calleth the heavens from above, and the earth, that he may judge his people!" What shame must flush the guilty cheek! what anguish wound the polluted breast! to have all their filthy practices and infamous tempers exposed before this innumerable crowd of witnesses! Fly, guilty sinners, instantly fly, earnestly fly to the purifying blood of Jesus, that all your sins may be blotted out, that you may be found unblamable and unreprovable in the presence of the assembled world; and, what is of infinitely more importance, in the sight of the omnipotent God.

There is no more need of this habitable globe. The righteous have fought a good fight, and finished their course. The wicked have been tried, and found incorrigible. "Wo be to the earth and to the works thereof!" Its streams are turned into pitch, its dust into brimstone, and the breath of the Almighty, like a torrent of fire, enkindles the whole. See! see! how the conflagration rages —spreads—prevails over all! The forests are in a blaze, and the mountains are wrapt in flame. Cities, kingdoms, continents, sink into the burning deluge. Cities, kingdoms, continents are no more! Through all the receptacles of water, through all the tracts of land, through the whole extent of air, nothing is discernible but one vast, prodigious fiery ruin. Where are now the treasures of the covetous? Where the possessions of the mighty? Where the delights of the voluptuous? How wise, how happy are they, whose portion is lodged in heavenly mansions! Their inheritance is incorruptible; such as the last

fire cannot reach, nor the dissolution of nature impair!

But see! the azure vault cleaves. The expanse of heaven is rolled back like a scroll; and the Judge, the Judge appears! "*He cometh*," cries a mighty seraph, the herald of his approach, "He cometh to judge the world in righteousness, and minister true judgment unto the people!" He cometh, not as formerly, in the habit of a servant, but clad with uncreated glory, and magnificently attended with the armies of heaven. Angels and the archangel stand before him, and ten thousand times ten thousand of these celestial spirits minister unto him. Behold him, ye followers of the Lamb, and wonder and love. This is he, who bore all your iniquities on the ignominious cross. This is he, who fulfilled all righteousness for the justification of your persons. Behold him, ye despisers of his grace, and wonder, and perish. This is he, whose merciful overtures you have contemned, and on whose precious blood you have trampled.

The great *white throne*, Rev. 20 : 11, is erected. The King of heaven, the Lord of glory, takes his seat on the dreadful tribunal. *Mercy*, on his right hand, displays the olive-branch of peace, and holds forth the crown of righteousness. *Justice*, on his left, poises the impartial scale, and unsheaths the sword of vengeance; while *Wisdom* and *Holiness*, brighter than ten thousand suns, beam in his divine aspect. What are all the preceding events to this new scene of dignity and awe! The peals of thunder sounding in the archangel's trumpet, the blaze of a burning world, the strong convulsions of expiring nature; the unnumbered myriads of the dead starting into instantaneous life, and thronging the astonished skies; all these seem *familiar* incidents, compared with the appearance of the incarnate Jehovah. Amazement, more than amazement, is all around. Terror and glory unite in their extremes. From the sight of his majestic eye, from the insupportable splendors of his face, the earth

itself and the very heavens *flee away*. How then—Oh! how shall the ungodly *stand*—stand in his angry presence, and draw near to this consuming fire!

Yet draw near they must, and take their trial—their decisive trial at his righteous bar. Every action comes under examination. For each idle word they must give account. Not so much as a secret thought escapes his scrutiny. How shall the criminals, the impenitent criminals, either conceal their guilt or elude the sentence? They have to do with a sagacity too keen to be deceived; with a power too strong to be resisted; and (oh! terrible, terrible consideration) with a severity of most just displeasure, that will *never* relent, *never* be entreated more. What ghastly despair appears in their faces! What racking agonies rend their distracted hearts! The bloody axe and torturing wheel are ease, are down, compared with their prodigious wo. And (O, holy God! wonderful in thy doings! fearful in thy judgments!) even this prodigious wo is small, compared with that indignation and wrath which are hanging over their guilty heads—which are even now falling on all the sons of rebellion—which will plunge them deep in aggravated and endless destruction.

> And is there a last day? and must there come
> A sure, a fixed, irrevocable doom?

Surely, then, the main care of our lives should be to obtain peace and acceptance before the dreadful tribunal of God. And what is sufficient for this purpose but righteousness? What righteousness, or whose? Ours, or Christ's? Ours, in the inherent graces wrought in us, in the holy works wrought by us? Or Christ's, in his most perfect obedience and meritorious satisfaction, wrought *for* us, and applied *to* us? God is as direct on this subject as his word can make him; every where blazoning the defects of our own righteousness, every where extolling the perfect obedience of our Redeemer.

"Behold," says the everlasting King, "I lay in Sion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." Isa. 28: 16. As this text contains so noble a display of our Saviour's consummate ability for his great work, as it is admirably calculated to preserve the mind from distressing fears, and to settle it in a steady tranquillity, I will dwell upon it for a moment.

How beautiful the gradation! How lively the account, and how very important the practical improvement! Come, look at the inscription which is engraven on this wonderful stone. *Behold!* Intended to rouse and fix our most attentive regard. The God of heaven speaks. He speaks, and every syllable is balm; every sentence is rich with consolation. If ever, therefore, we have ears to hear, let us bend them to this speaker, and on this occasion.

"*A stone.*" Every thing else is sliding sand, is yielding air, is a breaking bubble. Wealth will prove a vain shadow; honor an empty breath; pleasure a delusory dream; our own righteousness a spider's web. If on these we rely, disappointment must ensue, and shame is inevitable. Nothing but *Christ*, nothing but *Christ*, can stably support our spiritual interests, and realize our expectation of true happiness. And blessed be God, Christ is, for this purpose, not a stone only, but

"*A tried stone.*" Tried in the days of his humanity, by all the vehemence of temptation, and all the weight of afflictions; yet, like gold from the furnace, rendered more shining and illustrious by the fiery scrutiny. Tried, under the capacity of a Saviour, by millions and millions of depraved, wretched, ruined creatures, who have always found him *perfectly able*, and as *perfectly willing*, to expiate the most enormous guilt, to deliver from the most inveterate corruptions, and to save, to the very uttermost, all that come unto God through him.

"*A corner stone.*" Which not only sustains, but unites,

the edifice; incorporating both Jews and Gentiles, believers of various languages and manifold denominations—here, in one harmonious band of brotherly love—hereafter, in one common participation of eternal joy.

"*A precious stone.*" More precious than rubies: the pearl of great price, and the desire of all nations. Precious, with regard to the divine dignity of his person and the unequalled excellence of his mediatorial offices. In these, and all respects, wiser than Solomon, fairer than the children of men, "chiefest among ten thousand," and to the awakened sinner or enlightened believer, "*altogether lovely.*"

"*A sure foundation.*" Such as no pressure can shake; equal, more than equal to every weight, even to sin, the heaviest load in the world. *The rock of ages*, such as never has failed, never will fail those humble penitents, who cast their burden upon the Lord their Redeemer; who roll all their guilt, and fix their whole hopes, on his immovable basis—or, as the words may be rendered, *A foundation! a foundation!* There is a fine spirit of vehemency in this sentence, thus understood. It speaks the language of exultation, and expresses an important discovery. That which mankind infinitely want; that which multitudes seek, and find not; it is here! it is here! This, this is the foundation for their pardon, their peace, their eternal felicity.

Whosoever "*believeth*," though pressed with adversities, or surrounded by danger, "*shall not make haste.*" But, free from tumultuous and perplexing thoughts, preserved from rash and precipitate steps, he shall possess his soul in patience. Knowing the sufficiency of those merits, and the fidelity of that grace, on which he has reposed his confidence, he shall quietly, and without perturbation, wait for an expected end. And not only amidst the perilous and disastrous changes of life, but even in the day of everlasting judgment, such persons

shall *stand with boldness.* They shall look *up* to the grand Arbitrator—look *round* on all the solemnities of his appearance—look *forward* to the unalterable sentence —and neither feel anxiety, nor fear condemnation.

Reader, these awful scenes must pass before thine eyes, and thou wilt feel an interest in them, infinitely more impressive and affecting than all thy present joys or sorrows. Let thy unworthiness, fear, and guilt be *now* ever so great, there is hope concerning thee; for Jesus is "exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins;" but when thou shalt see "thy God in glory, and the world on fire," nothing will then remain for thee, but a "certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation;" or the immediate and happy expectation of being received "into the joy of your Lord." May God deliver thee from the bitter pains of eternal death, and bestow on thee the glorious blessings of everlasting life and salvation.

CHRIST COMING TO JUDGMENT.

Hear the Chief among ten thousand
Thus address his faithful few;
"Come, ye blessed of my Father,
"Heaven is prepar'd for you;
"I was hungry—I was thirsty—I was naked—
"And ye minister'd to me."

But how awful is the sentence,
"Go from me, ye cursed race,
"To that place of endless torment,
"Never more to see my face:
"I was hungry—I was thirsty—I was naked—
"Ye to me no mercy show'd."

Jesus, save a trembling sinner,
While thy wrath o'er sinners roll;
In this general wreck of nature,
Be the refuge of my soul:
Jesus, save me! Jesus, save me! when the lightnings
Blaze around from pole to pole.

No. 167.

THE

SINGLE TALENT IMPROVED.

THE Lord God is infinitely sovereign in the distribution of temporal blessings to men: to some he intrusts one, to others two, and to others five talents, and requires each to occupy with diligence until his Lord appear. Permit me, beloved reader, whose situation is obscure, and whose talent is inconsiderable, to show how thy money may be exchanged to the best advantage; how it may be rendered most productive, in honor to thy Redeemer, in benefit to the world, and in future glory to thyself.

1. Venture to *employ a portion of the little you possess in works of piety and mercy.* It is surely reasonable to give back to the Lord a part of that substance which was received exclusively from him; and to withhold, when he requires, argues either ingratitude for past enjoyments, or a distrust of his providence for time to come. Besides, if we believe the positive declaration of God, or the experience of his people, in different ages, "the way to get is to give." Seed will not take root when kept in the granary; it must be sown in the earth, if we expect it to take root, or spring up, or bear a liberal harvest. Money will not increase, or produce revenue to its proprietor, while locked up in the trunk; it must be actually loaned out, if interest is expected: thus it is with respect to the talent intrusted in our hands by the living God. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." "To every one that hath," and properly improves, "shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not," that is, who conducts as if he had not, "shall be taken away even that which he hath." "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." The children of the kingdom have often found these promises literally verified. As they ventured to devote a share of their worldly treasures for spiritual uses, their little fund has sensibly increased, and they have executed with ease schemes for the advancement of the divine glory, which

at first appeared altogether impracticable. The meal gradually multiplied in the barrel, and the oil rose in the cruise, as the widow distributed to the prophet of the Lord.

2. *Be not ashamed to present your offering, however useless or inconsiderable it may appear.* Persons whose circumstances are very circumscribed, are frequently discouraged; they refuse, not from want of inclination to give, but because they consider their gift as unprofitable, as unworthy the notice either of God or man; and therefore, because they cannot do a great deal, they conclude that it is better to do nothing. But this conclusion is both unreasonable and unscriptural. The landlord does not expect as much from his tenant who occupies a hundred, as from him who occupies a thousand acres of his land; yet it does not follow, that the former should be ashamed, or afraid, to bring in proportion to what he holds. The great Proprietor of all our talents, therefore, requires according "to what we have, and not according to what we have not." While the rich ought not to glory in the abundance of *their* oblations, the poor should not be ashamed of the scantiness of *theirs*. The two mites thrown into the treasury by the indigent widow, amounted to more, in the divine account, than the most liberal offerings of the rich. I might add, that it is really dangerous to attempt doing nothing, from the apprehension that we can do but little. Why was the man possessing one talent condemned? Not because he had no more, but because that one was neglected. Again, the servants possessing two or five talents were accepted, not because they *had* more, but because their two or five were suitably improved.

3. *Be diligent in redeeming your time to the best advantage, and by this means more can be spared for public purposes.* Inquire whether some moments have not been altogether wasted, which might and ought to have been industriously occupied; or whether some hours have not been trifled away upon vanities, which might have been improved in a more profitable manner. When there is some great work to execute, or journey to perform, we are the more careful to occupy each moment to advantage: we rise early, we shake off a slothful, indolent disposition, and actually add to the hours of the day by more industriously redeeming them. Let us consider the great work to be finished:

our God to be glorified; our generation to be served; the church to be edified: and time is the day in which all this must be done, or left undone for ever. "The night cometh, when no man can work." True it is, thou mayest glorify God more perfectly in heaven than on earth; but thou canst not glorify him there by advancing the edification or salvation of thy fellow-creatures. In heaven there will be no indigent members of Jesus to be relieved, no ignorant to be instructed, no stranger to be brought into the family, and no dejected, disquieted child to be comforted or supported. Listen not to the dictates of flesh and blood, but look forward and inquire what will be most conducive to your glory and felicity for ever, and improve your life accordingly; if thy heart and thy flesh are ready to fail, through much exertion in the cause of God, remember that there is a long rest in the grave, and an eternity of enjoyment in thy Father's house.

4. *Aim at the utmost economy in every part of your living;* in eating, in drinking, and in wearing; and thus you can render what is just to your creditors, and afford more for generous uses. Industry will be unprofitable, unless connected with a becoming frugality. The proverb is ancient and true, "A penny saved is a penny gained." Look therefore into your domestic management, and examine whether some expenses might not be retrenched; whether your children could not be clothed in a manner more plain, and yet decent; whether some luxuries might not be omitted, and your families be no less comfortable and respectable. Is it not reasonable that we should be denied the superfluities of life, rather than that others should want its real necessaries; or that our bodies should want pampering, rather than others want that knowledge which is indispensably requisite to salvation? Consider, also, to what the great God stooped for your sake and mine: he emptied himself of his glory; he became of no reputation: and shall not we, for the sake of his poor, and the spread of his Gospel, deny ourselves those ornaments which are but fanciful and false? For your sake and mine he endured hunger, and thirst, and nakedness; and is it not reasonable that we, in return, be satisfied with temperate enjoyments, in order to feed the hungry and clothe the naked members of this compassionate Jesus? Is it not better that we be denied,

for a time, those luxuries which secure a happiness merely sensual, than that others, through ignorance, be deprived for ever of God, and glory, and all that constitutes the happiness of a rational being? It is related of the excellent Mr. Hervey, that he often appeared in a dress far inferior to his station, while he abounded in acts of piety and mercy. A lady of rank, at her death, left for her children this advice: "Save your pocket-money, and dedicate it to the Lord's poor, and he will abundantly repay you; a cup of cold water, given in the name of a disciple, shall not lose its reward." The Rev. Philip Henry held it as his motto, "I am no fool if I part with that which I cannot keep, in the prospect of being rewarded with that which I cannot lose."

My beloved reader, I submit to you these few, familiar directions on the mode of occupying thy talent to the greatest advantage; and are they not worthy of an experiment? Are the honor of thy dear Lord, the most precious interests of the souls of others, the everlasting interests of thine own soul, concerned in the use of thy worldly goods, and art thou not therefore reasonably called to try what can be done? I know that the great God, he whose "is the earth and the fulness thereof," he at whose disposal are all beings, whether visible or invisible, has no need of thy instrumentality, or mine; he could easily employ the ravens of the wilderness to supply the wants of his children, and not solicit our charity; he could easily command "a nation to be born at once," and thus dispense with our aid in diffusing the knowledge of salvation. But this is not his ordinary procedure. He stoops to ask and accept our services, however worthless, for the support of his cause. Yet, although ten thousand talents have been forgiven us, *how little do we love;* how grudgingly do we spare a single talent at the call of our God? Although we have been "bought at a price, all price beyond," yet how backward are we to spend a *little time*, a *little strength*, or a *little treasure*, as an expression of our gratitude for *so great salvation!* Do angels weep? It must be at this coldness and indifference of man.

May God enable the reader to "devise liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand."

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No. 168.

TO A PERSON

ENGAGED IN A LAWSUIT.

WRITTEN BY AN EMINENT COUNSELLOR AT LAW, STILL IN THE PRACTICE OF HIS PROFESSION.

Sir—You find yourself involved in a suit at law, in which, I doubt not, you believe yourself wholly in the right, and your adversary wholly in the wrong. And you probably feel yourself justified in maintaining your rights, to the utmost extent of the law. Nay, you even think you "do well to be angry" with him for prosecuting you so unjustly, or for unreasonably preventing you from the recovery of what you consider as honestly your due. You suppose yourself in the way of duty—and possibly you are. You can better determine this point, if with a humble and devout spirit you have sought the blessing of God on your business by fervent prayer. But as a suit at law is sometimes a serious matter in its effects, let me request your attention, a moment, to one or two considerations.

I would first ask you whether, before you engaged in this contest, either as plaintiff or defendant, you sought direction and wisdom from Him "who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not?" Did you pray for yourself, that you might be guided in the path of duty; or for your antagonist, that God would turn his heart, and dispose him to be just and merciful towards you? Did you try every

other mode of reconciliation and redress in your power, before you committed your cause to the decision of the law? Did you go to your opponent in person, and in the spirit of kindness and soberness remonstrate with him, and endeavor to persuade him to do you justice? If he is prosecuting you for injuries inflicted, or rights withheld, have you offered him an honest reparation? Or, if he resides far from you, did you write to him to the same purpose? Or have you availed yourself of the mediation of friends, or neighbors, to effect a peaceable and friendly settlement? Have you offered him a settlement by arbitration? In fine, did you delay resorting to a legal remedy till it was evident that no other means could procure you that redress which it was *necessary* you should obtain, and till you were obliged to defend yourself by *law*, because your adversary would not accept any offer of reasonable satisfaction, or terms of reconciliation? If you have not done this, I fear you have gone to law hastily and unwisely. It is not, however, too late to attempt this *now;* and I would earnestly recommend to you to set about it without delay.

Do not say that it is his business to come to you; for this is not the temper that will bring you together. In the business of reconciliation, *some one* must move first. If your adversary has not magnanimity enough to do this, let it appear that you *have;* and without being nice and punctilious about the mode, set yourself honestly and earnestly to adjust the difficulty, and be reconciled with your neighbor. Perhaps you have both thrown out hard speeches against each other, and these have been magnified by talebearers till your anger has risen to the highest pitch. It may be that in this way you have both been grossly abused by others.

If you would reach the heart of your opponent, and

insure a fair and candid hearing, see him alone. If his usual associates are about him, he may feel bound by a sort of pride to act to your face what perhaps he has boasted when you were absent. Possibly you might, in similar circumstances, do the same. If third persons must be present, be sure that they are peacemakers. See him when he is sick, or in trouble; for then the heart is softened, and susceptible of kindlier feelings. Indeed, every man has his accessible side, and his propitious moments, when those who seek it can easily approach him, and when he will listen to terms of accommodation with an enemy. Avail yourself of these means without delay.

A spirit of litigation is not a spirit to die in. Consider that you may soon die; and that suddenly, and without preparation. And can you be fit for heaven, not having forgiven your brother on earth? or not having rendered him his due, when in your power? Do you not know that God will not forgive those who forgive not others? How severe was the doom of the hard-hearted steward, who exerted the whole rigor of the law even on his *debtor!* His indignant lord consigned him to merited punishment; and Jesus closes the parable with this solemn warning: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." Matt. 18: 35. The duty of forgiveness is insisted on throughout the Gospel. "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but *if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*" Matt. 6: 14, 15. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for what a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Gal. 6: 7.

Are you ready, by living in a state of hostility to your neighbor, to sow a copious and *sure* harvest of the wrath of God? Are you prepared to reap it? Do you not pray,

"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us?" Remember the condition which you propose in that prayer—*as we forgive.* Are you willing that the forgiveness of your sins, and of course the salvation of your soul for ever, should hang upon that condition? Consider, I beseech you, the import of that petition: "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; *first be reconciled to thy brother,* and *then* come and offer thy gift." Matt. 5: 23, 24.

Consider the long train of evils, temporal and spiritual, in a lawsuit. Even in a temporal view, little or nothing is gained by litigation; and what multitudes it has brought to rags, and intemperance, and ruin. When have you ever known even a *successful* litigant who, on settling the whole account of lost time, neglect of other business, fees of counsel, and other contingent expenses, could say he had, on the whole, gained any money by prevailing in his suit? If the object of the suit be a piece of land—by the time it has proceeded through the usual delays in court; search of records; expense of surveys; proof of ancient boundaries; contests respecting the legality of proceedings by collectors, assessors, or sheriffs, and adverse titles by possession or otherwise; together with repeated visits to consult counsel, and the cost and delay of questions of law arising upon exceptions taken to the opinion of the judge who tried the cause—the land generally costs the prevailing party much more by the acre, than he would have been obliged to pay to extinguish the adverse claim, real or pretended, and purchase a quiet title to himself; besides the loss of the good will of his opponent, perhaps for ever. And such is too often the result of lawsuits founded on other causes.

If the contest has been severe, the loss to the losing

party must be very great, and perhaps ruinous. If so, it is more than probable that he will entertain deadly hatred to you and yours during life. He will regard your suit as the mildew of his earthly hopes. He will never perceive the justice of the verdict against him; but will attribute it to the perjury of your witnesses, or to the partiality of some juror in your favor, or to the error of them all. No matter what the cause, he will feel injured, and consider you as the author of his wrongs. His children, also, will be likely to regard yours as the children of him who destroyed the peace and marred the prosperity of their father. Or if he is able to sustain the pecuniary loss, still, the disgrace or the disappointment of defeat will long rankle in his bosom. Thus, the animosities engendered by one lawsuit are entailed on successive generations. What more could the grand adversary of the religion of Christ desire?

If you had submitted the matter to a considerate neighbor *at the outset*, and abided by his opinion, even if it were not strictly legal, how much evil, and sin, and trouble, might have been prevented! Think seriously whether, in the prosecution of your suit, you may not have been the innocent occasion even of *perjury*. Has not some witness of yours, out of his zeal in your cause, or some one of your opponents, out of his zeal against you, either omitted altogether some material fact, or testified to something which, though literally true, is calculated and intended to be understood falsely by the judge or jury? And are you not in danger of being tempted yourself to pervert truth and justice, by keeping back some important piece of evidence, and giving the cause a false coloring in your own favor? And may you not be even exposed to the temptation of procuring false testimony by some indirect means, to secure success? How much equivocation, and partiality, and even false swearing, are daily exhibited in courts of law!

And if you are engaged in the vindication of your *character* from unjust aspersions, or in compelling the performance of a personal contract, or avenging a personal wrong, or in defending yourself against an unjust prosecution, consider, I pray you, whether, before you appealed to the law, you honestly endeavored, in the spirit of Christian kindness and liberality, to become reconciled to your adversary; or to persuade him by mild though earnest expostulations, to regard your rights. Have you forgiven as much of his misconduct as you ought to forgive? Have you accorded to his frailties the same allowances you would expect from the charity of others in the like case? Are you confident that you are *in no way* the aggressor? Have you dealt justly and fairly with him *in all respects?* Is there no fault or blame on *your* side, as well as on *his?* Have you devoted a single hour, *alone,* to a careful review of your own conduct and motives in the whole affair, as in the presence of an Omniscient Judge? Are you *sure* that your cause is wholly just, in His sight? Are you not endeavoring, in effect, by the aid of the law, either wholly to avoid, or at least to put off, either the payment of an honest debt, or the performance of a just obligation? Are you not indulging yourself in the erroneous, but too prevalent notion, that it is not morally wrong fictitiously to convey away your property beyond the reach of attachment, lest in the sale of it by legal process, for payment of your debts, it should not produce its full value? Are you not making the law an instrument of revenge; seeking, by success in this suit, to avenge an injury received at some prior period? Do not deceive yourself. Let me entreat you to answer these questions *faithfully and truly,* as at the bar of the Judge of all; and act towards your opponent as you would that he should conduct towards you. Be reconciled to him. See him face to face, and without the presence of witnesses

to excite either his pride and anger, or your own. Enter with mildness upon the discussion of the matter of your dispute. Be just to him. Render to him his due. If this course were honestly pursued in all cases, I venture to affirm that a vast majority of the lawsuits which now end in hatred and revenge, would terminate in kindness and mutual reconciliation.

Soon, very soon, this world and all its vanities will pass away. A few years hence it will make but little difference whether you have won or lost the cause in which you are now engaged: the more serious concern will then be, whether you have forgiven your brother, and are in charity with all mankind, or whether your bosom is still the residence of malignant passions; whether you are entitled to be ranked among the peacemakers, or whether you have been accessory to the sowing and ripening of a harvest of deadly feuds and hostilities, which will break up the friendly intercourse of neighbors and families for generations? Did not Christ die for you both? Are you not brethren, children of the same common parent, professing to worship the same Lord—will you not stand at the bar of the same Judge, and do you not hope for the same salvation? Alas! if you die with hearts still rankling with rage against each other, have you not reason to fear that you will indeed both be tenants of the same dreary region of eternal darkness and despair?

Consider what is the *character* you are now forming. As death leaves you, so judgment will find you. "He that is unjust, will be unjust still." He who is unholy at death, will be unholy for ever. Does your present litigation, even if you are on the right side of the cause, tend to cherish in you the sentiments of love, and kindness, and charity, and mercy; or does it awaken and strengthen those of anger, and revenge, and a severe and unforgiving tem-

per? And can this be a temper fit to die in? Is it fit to *live* in? Is it not, then, decidedly the part of wisdom to cease from litigation, to be reconciled to your offending brother, to render to him his due, and to "have fervent charity among yourselves?" for charity covereth, or excuseth, the multitude of another's sins. "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you."

The objects of your present concern will soon be less than nothing in your estimation; the affairs of time, and all the pursuits of men, will fade from your view, and vanish into nothing; and the realities of eternity will rise to a degree of importance, glorious to the child of God, but terrible indeed to those who have hitherto neglected to regard them. All flesh will be summoned before the tribunal of an omniscient Judge, whom no pretences can deceive, no strength resist, no sophistry or falsehood mislead.

When thou, O Lord, shalt stand disclosed
In majesty severe,
And sit in judgment on my soul,
O how shall I appear!

Every character will then be clearly developed—every soul will go to his own place: either acquitted by the intercession of a heavenly Advocate, and admitted to happiness eternal; or justly condemned, and consigned to misery without end!

Whoso is wise, and will ponder these things, shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.

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No. 169.

MEMOIR

OF

MRS. HARRIET NEWELL,

WIFE OF

THE REV. SAMUEL NEWELL,

MISSIONARY TO INDIA.

The subject of this Memoir was a daughter of Mr. Moses Atwood, a merchant of Haverhill, Mass., and was born October 10, 1793. Her childhood was marked with cheerfulness, sensibility, and a taste for reading.

She manifested no peculiar and lasting seriousness before the year 1806. In the summer of that year, while at the academy in Bradford, a place highly favored of the Lord, she first became the subject of those deep religious impressions which laid the foundation of her Christian life. With several of her companions in study, she was roused to attend to the one thing needful. They turned off their eyes from beholding vanity, and employed their leisure in searching the Scriptures and listening to the instructions of those who taught them the way of life. A few extracts from her letters and diary will, in some measure, show the state of her mind at that time.

"1806. Dear L.—I need your kind instructions now as much as ever. I should be willing to leave every thing

for God; willing to be called by any name which tongue can utter, and to undergo any sufferings, if it would but make me humble, and be for his glory. Do advise me what I shall do for his glory. I care not for myself. Though he lay ever so much upon me, I would be content. Oh, could I but recall this summer! But it is past, never to return. I have one constant companion, the BIBLE, from which I derive the greatest comfort. *This* I intend for the future shall guide me.

"——Did you ever read Doddridge's Sermons to Young People? They are very beautiful sermons. It appears strange to me, that I am not more interested in the cause of Christ, when he has done so much for us! But I *will* form a resolution that I will give myself up entirely to him. Pray for me, that my heart may be changed. I long for the happy hour when we shall be free from all sin, and enjoy God in heaven. But, if it would be for his glory, I should be willing to live my threescore years and ten. My heart bleeds for our companions, who are on the brink of destruction. In what manner shall I speak to them? But perhaps I am in the same way."

In another letter to the same friend, she says, "What did Paul and Silas say to the jailer? '*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*' Let us do the same. Let us improve the accepted time, and make our peace with God. This day, my L., I have formed a resolution, that I will devote the remainder of my life entirely to the service of God. Write to me. Tell me my numerous *outward* faults; though you know not the faults of my heart, yet tell me all you know, that I may improve. I shall receive it as a token of love."

"Sept. 1, 1806. A large number of my companions, of both sexes, with whom I have associated this summer, are in deep distress for their immortal souls. Many, who were

formerly gay and thoughtless, are now in tears, anxiously inquiring what they shall do to be saved. Oh, how rich is the mercy of Jesus! He dispenses his favors to whom he pleases, without regard to age or sex. Surely, it is a wonderful display of the sovereignty of God, to make me a subject of his kingdom, while many of my companions, far more amiable than I am, are left to grovel in the dust, or to mourn their wretched condition without one gleam of hope.

"Sept. 18. How great are the changes which take place in my mind in the course of one short day! I have felt deeply distressed for the depravity of my heart, and have been ready to despair of the mercy of God. But the light of divine truth has this evening irradiated my soul, and I have enjoyed such composure as I never knew before.

"Sept. 20. This has been a happy day to me. When conversing with a Christian friend upon the love of Jesus, I was lost in raptures. My soul rejoiced in the Lord, and joyed in the God of my salvation. A sermon preached by Mr. M. this evening, has increased my happiness. This is too much for me, a sinful worm of the dust, deserving only eternal punishment. Lord, it is enough.

"Oct. 6. The day on which Christ arose from the dead has again returned. How shall I spend it? Oh, how the recollection of misspent Sabbaths imbitters every present enjoyment! With pain do I remember the holy hours which were formerly sinned away. Frequently did I repair to novels to shorten the irksome hours as they passed. Why was I not cut off in the midst of *this* my wickedness?

"Oct. 10. Oh, how much have I enjoyed of God this day! Such views of his holy character, such a desire to glorify his holy name, I never before experienced. Oh, that this frame might continue through life!

'My willing soul would stay
In such a frame as this,
And sit and sing herself away
To everlasting bliss.'

"This is my birthday. Thirteen years of my short life have gone for ever.

"Dec. 31. This day has past away rapidly and happily. Oh, the real bliss that I have enjoyed! such love to God, such a desire to glorify him, I never possessed before. The hour of sweet release will shortly come; O, what joyful tidings!

"Jan. 5, 1807. I have had exalted thoughts of the character of God this day. I have ardently longed to depart and be with Jesus.

"May 2. Where is the cross, which Christians speak of so frequently? all that I do for Jesus is pleasant. Though perhaps I am ridiculed by the gay and thoughtless for my choice of religion, yet the inward comfort which I enjoy doubly compensates for all this. I do not wish for the approbation and love of the world, neither for its splendor nor its riches.

'For one blest hour at God's right hand,
I'll give them all away.'"

For nearly two years, she enjoyed the presence of her Saviour. The third year of her Christian course was unhappily marked with something of that apathy which, it is painful to confess, too often characterizes the Christian of maturer years. In the summer of 1809, she thus pours forth the sorrows of her bleeding heart, in view of her departure from God:

"August 27, 1809. The first ten years of my life were spent in vanity. I was entirely ignorant of the depravity

of my heart. The summer that I entered my eleventh year, I attended a dancing-school. My conscience would sometimes tell me, that my time was foolishly spent; and, though I had never heard it intimated that such amusements were criminal, yet I could not rest, until I had solemnly determined, that, when the school closed, I would immediately become religious. But these resolutions were not carried into effect. Although I attended every day to secret prayer, and read the Bible with greater attention than before, yet I soon became weary of these exercises, and, by degrees, omitted entirely the duties of the closet. When I entered my thirteenth year, I was sent by my parents to the academy, at Bradford. A revival of religion commenced in the neighborhood, which, in a short time, spread into the school. A large number of the young ladies were anxiously inquiring what they should do to inherit eternal life. I began to inquire what these things meant. My attention was solemnly called to the concerns of my immortal soul. I was a stranger to hope; and I feared the ridicule of my gay companions. My heart was opposed to the character of God; and I felt that, if I continued an enemy to his government, I must eternally perish. My convictions of sin were not so pungent and distressing as many have had, but they were of long continuance. It was more than three months before I was brought to cast my soul on the Saviour of sinners, and rely on him alone for salvation. The ecstasies which many new-born souls possess, were not mine. But if I was not lost in rapture, on reflecting upon what I had escaped, I was filled with a sweet peace, a heavenly calmness, which I can never describe. The honors, applauses, and titles of this vain world appeared like trifles 'light as air.' The character of Jesus appeared infinitely lovely, and I could say, with the Psalmist, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on the earth I desire

besides thee.' The awful gulf I had escaped filled me with astonishment. My gay associates were renounced, and the friends of Jesus became my *dear* friends. The destitute, broken state of the church at H. prevented me from openly professing my faith in Jesus; but it was a privilege which I longed to enjoy.

"But, alas, these seasons, so precious, did not long continue. Soon was I led to exclaim, 'O that I were as in months past!' My zeal for the cause of religion abated; while the vain world engrossed my affections, which had been consecrated to my Redeemer. My Bible, once so lovely, was entirely neglected. Novels and romances engaged my thoughts, and hour after hour was foolishly spent in the perusal of them. The company of Christians became, by degrees, irksome and unpleasant. I endeavored to shun them. The voice of conscience would frequently whisper, 'all is not right.' Many a sleepless night have I passed, after a day of vanity and sin. But such conflicts did not bring me home to the fold, from which, like a stray lamb, I had wandered far away. A religion which was intimately connected with the amusements of the world, and the friendship of those who are at enmity with God, would have suited well my depraved heart. But I knew the religion of the Gospel was vastly different. It exalts the Creator, while it humbles the creature in the dust.

"Such was my awful situation! I lived only to wound the cause of my ever-blessed Saviour. Weep, O my soul, when contemplating and recording these sins of my youth. Be astonished at the long-suffering of Jehovah! "How great a God is our God!' The death of a beloved parent and uncle had but little effect on my hard heart. Though these afflictions moved my passions, they did not lead me to the fountain of consolation. But God, who is rich in mercy, did not leave me here! He had prepared my heart to re-

ceive his grace, and he glorified the riches of his mercy by carrying on the work. I was providentially invited to visit a friend in Newburyport. I complied with the invitation. The evening previous to my return home, I heard the Rev. Mr. M'F. preach. It was the 28th of June, 1809. How did the truths which he delivered sink deep into my inmost soul! My past transgressions rose like great mountains before me. The most poignant anguish seized my mind; my carnal security fled; and I felt myself a guilty transgressor, naked before a holy God. Mr. B. returned with me the next day to H. Never, no, never, while memory retains her seat in my breast, shall I forget the affectionate manner in which he addressed me. His conversation had the desired effect. I then made the solemn resolution, as I trust, in the strength of Jesus, that I would make a sincere dedication of my all to my Creator, both for time and eternity. This resolution produced a calm serenity and composure, to which I had long been a stranger. How lovely the way of salvation then appeared! O how lovely was the character of the Saviour! The duty of professing publicly on which side I was, now was impressed on my mind. I came forward and offered myself to the church, was accepted, received into communion, and commemorated, for the first time, the dying love of the blessed Jesus, August 6, 1809. This was a precious season, long to be remembered. O the depths of sovereign grace! Eternity will be too short to celebrate the perfections of God."

The subsequent years of her short life evinced the sincerity of her repentance, and the constant indwelling of that Holy Spirit, whose office it is to illumine, guide, and sanctify; who promises to "be as the dew unto Israel;" that "he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon." The limited pages of a Tract admit of only a selection from

what she wrote of her religious exercises, during the last year of her continuance in America.

"Aug. 28, 1809. I awoke last night, and spent a most delightful hour in contemplating divine truth. The words of David flowed sweetly through my mind: 'In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.' Most willingly would I resign all earthly pleasures for *one* hour in communion with my God.

"Sept. 29. Examined myself strictly by this question: Am I indeed a real member of Christ's kingdom? If I am, why are my affections so languid, my heart so cold, my desires so few for the enlargement of Christ's kingdom? Why is my heart so prone to leave God? Why am I so interested in the concerns of time and sense; and why are the important concerns of my soul so little regarded? Decide, dearest Jesus, the doubtful case. If I never yet have tasted and seen that thou art gracious, O let me now, before it be for ever too late.

"Attended our conference this evening. I think I enjoyed what the world can neither give nor take away.

"Dec. 31. I have now come to the close of another year. How various have been the scenes through which I have been called to pass this year! But what have I done for God? what for the interests of religion? and what for my own soul? I have passed through *one* of the most solemn scenes of my life; I have taken the covenant of God upon me; I have solemnly joined myself to the church of the blessed Jesus.

"Oh that I might now, as in the presence of the great Jehovah, and his holy angels, with penitential sorrow confess my past ingratitude, and, in humble reliance on the strength of Jesus, resolve to devote the ensuing year, and the remaining part of my days, to his service.

"Feb. 10, 1810. What great reason have I for thankfulness to God, that I am still in the land of the living, and have another opportunity of recording with my pen his tender mercy and loving-kindness. I have been, for almost five weeks, unable to write; and, for a week, confined to my bed. But JESUS has undertaken to be my Physician; he has graciously restored me to health; and when greatly distressed with pain, he has afforded me the sweet consolations of his Spirit, and brought me willingly to resign my soul into his arms, and wait the event of his providence, whether life or death.

"Oh that this sickness might be for my eternal good! may it be made the means of weaning me from all terrestrial enjoyments, and of fixing my hope and my trust in the merits of Jesus. Then should I have cause to bless God for his chastening rod, and, through eternity, count all these afflictive dispensations as great mercies.

"Feb. 18. How easily can God disconcert the plans formed by short-sighted mortals! I had fondly flattered myself, that before this I should have met with the assembly of the saints, and sat under the droppings of the sanctuary; that I should have joined my Christian friends in their social conference, and heard the truths of the Gospel explained by our dear pastor. But Jehovah determined otherwise. He has again laid his chastening rod upon me, by afflicting me with sickness and pain. But 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.' I have a renewed opportunity of examining my submission to God; and do now, as in his presence, renewedly resolve to devote myself a living sacrifice to him. I think I can say, that afflictions are good for me. In times of the greatest distress, I have been brought to cry within myself, 'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth to him good.' I think I am *willing* to bear whatever God sees fit to lay upon

me. Let my dear heavenly Father inflict the *keenest* anguish, I will submit; for he is infinitely excellent, and *can* do nothing wrong.

"Feb. 25. With the light of this holy morning, I desire to offer to the kind Shepherd of Israel, who never slumbers nor sleeps, a morning tribute of thanksgiving and praise. Oh that my whole soul might be drawn out in love to God; and may all my faculties unite with the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem in praising the immortal King for what he *has done* and still *is doing* for rebellious man. But I fall *infinitely* short of the honor due to his glorious name. When shall I arrive at the destined port of rest, and with the blood-washed millions praise the Lamb of God for redeeming love? Hasten, blessed Immanuel, that glorious period, when all thy exiled children shall arrive at their eternal home. Oh for a tongue to sound aloud the honors of the blessed Jesus!

"Oct. 10. This day I entered upon my eighteenth year. Seventeen years have rolled almost insensibly away. I still remain a pilgrim in this barren land. Merciful Jesus, on the commencement of this year, may thy supporting hand be underneath me; and if my life is prolonged, may it be more faithfully devoted to thee, and to thy blessed cause.

"Oct. 20. My friend, N. H.,* called upon us this morning. She informed me of her determination to quit her native land, to endure the sufferings of a Christian amongst heathen nations—to spend her days in India's sultry clime. How did this news affect my heart! Is she willing to do all this for God, and shall I refuse to lend my little aid, in a land where Divine Revelation has

* Mrs. Judson, wife of Rev. Dr. Judson, missionary in the Burman empire.

shed its clearest rays? I have *felt* more for the salvation of the heathen this day, than I recollect to have felt through my whole past life.

"How dreadful is their situation! What heart but would bleed at the idea of the sufferings they endure, to obtain the joys of Paradise! What can I do, that the light of the Gospel may shine upon them? They are perishing for lack of knowledge, while I enjoy the glorious privileges of a Christian land! Great God, direct me! Oh, make me in *some* way beneficial to their immortal souls.

"Oct. 23. Mr. M. introduced Mr. N——* to our family. He appears to be an engaged Christian. Expects to spend his life in preaching the Saviour to the benighted pagans.

"Oct. 31. Mr. N. called on us this morning. He gave me some account of the dealings of God with his soul. If such a man, who has devoted himself to the service of the Gospel, has determined to labor in the most difficult part of the vineyard, and is willing to renounce his earthly happiness for the interest of religion—if *he* doubts his possessing love to God, what shall *I* say of *myself?*

"Charlestown, April 17, 1811. How shall I record the events of this day! How can I tranquillize my disturbed mind enough to engage in the *once* delightful employment of writing? Returned from Boston in the evening, after spending three days very agreeably with my friends C. and N. M—— handed me a letter with an appearance which indicated that something unusual was contained in it. I broke the seal, and what were my emotions when I read

* Mr. Newell was one of the five young men who, at the General Association of Massachusetts, convened in Bradford, June 27, 1810, publicly consecrated their future years to the preaching of Christ among pagan nations. The others were Messrs. Hall, Judson, Mills, and Nott.

the name of ——. The contents were not such as I might answer at a *distant* period; they required an *immediate* answer. And now what shall I say? How shall I decide this *important*, this *interesting* question? Shall I consent to leave for ever the *parent* of my youth, and *friends* of my life; the dear scenes of my childhood, and my native country, and go to a land of *strangers*, 'not knowing the things that shall befall me there?' Oh for direction from Heaven! Oh for that 'wisdom' which 'is profitable to direct!' I will go to God, and, with an unprejudiced mind, seek his guidance. I will cast this heavy burden on him, humbly trusting that he will sustain me, and direct me in the path of duty.

"April 19. The *important decision* is not yet made. I am still wavering. I long to see and converse with my dear mother. So delicate is my situation, that I dare not unbosom my heart to a single person. What shall I do? Could tears direct me in the path of duty, surely I should be directed. My heart aches; I know not *what* to do! 'Guide me, O thou great Jehovah!'

"April 21. Have now retired to my chamber, once more to vent, in silence, my unavailing sighs, and, with an almost bursting heart, implore divine relief and direction."

She returned the ensuing week to her mother, and shortly after addressed the following letter to Mr. Newell:

"———Were I to consult the natural inclinations of my heart, my love of worldly ease and temporal enjoyment, my dread of ridicule from the world—I should decidedly answer in the negative. But these are not the only difficulties. If I reflect upon my youth, the little knowledge I have of the world, the want of natural abilities, a better education, and a stronger assurance of my interest

in the covenant of grace, I tremble at the idea. I wish to follow the guidance of Heaven. The subject is too solemn to be trifled with, and too important to be hastily decided.

"Wishing to converse personally with my dear mother, I have returned to H. It afforded me much consolation to find her calm and submissive. Gladly would I leave with her, the dear guardian of my youth, this point, and wait her kind decision. But no. Although she will not refuse her consent, nor oppose any determination I may come to, yet she will not advise. Who then shall guide and direct me? Should I apply for advice to other Christians, their opinions would vary like the wind. Should I wait for an answer to prayer, I might be guided by my own imagination, and instead of following the Saviour, might follow my selfish interests. Oh for the direction of Jehovah! I tremble lest I should dishonor God by an improper decision. Will Mr. N. remember Harriet at the mercy-seat? Will he implore for her the guidance of that covenant Redeemer whom she has professed to love? It will be a source of consolation to be assured of a remembrance in the prayers of Christians."

June 29. In a letter to a friend at Boston, she writes, "The all-important question is at length decided. Many were the conflicts within my breast. But at length, from a firm persuasion of duty, and a willingness to comply, after much examination and prayer, I answered in the affirmative."

November 21. She wrote to Mr. Newell as follows: "The contemplated mission occupies my sleeping and my waking thoughts. Oh, who would not sacrifice all that is dear in life, to carry the glad tidings of salvation to heathen lands! When, O when will the day dawn, and the day-star arise on distant India? When will private Christians

be more importunate in prayer for the universal spread of the Gospel? Oh, when will the heralds of the cross rejoice to be counted worthy to suffer for Jesus, and obey his last command, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature?'"

On the 6th of February, 1812, the first American Foreign Missionaries, Messrs. Newell, Hall, Nott, Judson, and Rice, were ordained at Salem, Mass. February 18, Mr. and Mrs. N., with their missionary associates, Mr. and Mrs. Judson, embarked for the eastern world. While detained in the harbor, Mrs. N. addressed the following letter to her mother:

"Here am I, my dear mother, on board the brig Caravan, in a neat little cabin, with brother and sister J., Mr. P., and Capt. I., (who will spend the night with us,) and another *dear friend*, whose beloved society enlivens my spirits, and renders my situation pleasant. I have at length taken leave of the land of my forefathers, and entered the vessel, which will be the place of my residence till I reach the desired haven. Think not, my dear mother, that we are now sitting in silent sorrow, strangers to peace. O no; though the idea that I have left you, to see you no more, is painful indeed, yet I think I can say, that I have found the grace of my Redeemer sufficient for me; his strength has been made perfect in my weakness. We have been engaged in singing this evening, and can you believe me, when I tell you, that I never engaged in this delightful part of worship with greater pleasure? I feel a sweet satisfaction in reflecting upon the undertaking in which I have engaged. It is not to acquire the riches and honors of this fading world; but to assist one of Christ's dear

ministers in carrying the glad tidings of salvation to the perishing heathen of Asia.

"I never shall repay you, my dear mother, for all the kindness and love you have shown me thus far in life. Accept my sincere thanks for every favor, and Oh forgive me for so often causing you pain and anxiety. May the Almighty reward you a hundred fold for your kindness to me. And now, my dear mother, what more shall I say, but ask you to pray for me, and engage other Christians to do the same.

'There is a calm for those who weep,
A rest for weary pilgrims--.'

Parting sounds will not be heard in heaven. May we meet there, after lives filled with usefulness and duty."

At the expiration of the year, Mrs. A. was again refreshed with a most interesting communication from her beloved child, narrating the diversity of scenes through which, in this new era of life, she had been led, exulting in the condescension of that Infinite Love, which had landed her safe on pagan shores, and seemed pointing to pagan hearts as her future field of labor. The limits of a Tract admit of no extracts from this diary, except that part which states a few facts important to the continuation of Mrs. N.'s history.

"June 12. Rejoice with us, my dear mother, in the goodness of our covenant God. After seeing nothing but sky and water for *one hundred and fourteen days*, we this morning heard the joyful exclamation of 'Land, land!'

"June 16. Arrived at Calcutta.

"June 20. Serampore. Came here last evening by water. The dear Baptist missionaries received us with the same cordiality as they would if we had been own brothers

and sisters. This is the most delightful place I ever saw. Here the missionaries enjoy the comforts of life, and are actively engaged in the Redeemer's service.

"July 16. We are ordered by government to leave the British territories, and return to America immediately. Capt. H. will be ready to sail in three weeks. He has requested a clearance, but it has been absolutely refused him, unless we engage to leave India with him. Thus is our way hedged up; thus are all our prospects blasted. We cannot feel that we are called in Providence to go to Burmah. Every account we have from that savage, barbarous nation, confirms us in our opinion that the way is not prepared for the spread of the Gospel there. The viceroy would not hesitate to take away our lives for the smallest offence. The situation of a female is peculiarly hazardous. But where else can we go? Must we leave these heathen shores? Must we be the instruments of discouraging all the attempts of American Christians to give these nations the word of life? My spirit faints within me.

"July 29. Early this morning brother J. called at our room, unexpectedly, from Calcutta. Captain C. has agreed to carry two of us in his vessel to the Isle of France. I will go, leaning on the Lord, and depending on him for direction, support, and happiness. We shall leave the dear mission family at Serampore when another rising sun dispels the darkness of the night.

"Aug. 4. Though sick enough to keep my bed, I have this day come to the ship, which will probably be my home for some time to come.

"Aug. 19. Our situation on board the Gillespie has become more pleasant. We resolved to be very strict in our hours of devotion, social and private; to avoid all trivial conversation, and not to countenance profaneness by a look of complacency; and to improve every opportunity

of introducing religious conversation at table. This kind of life, though at first it excited ridicule, has nevertheless procured us respect. When we are present, swearing and indecent talk are laid aside, and we have not so much reason, as formerly, to say, with a saint of old, "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar."

"Aug. 20. Oh how do I long for the society of dear Christians! Oh, my dear mother, prize your devout acquaintance; value the society of the dear children of God.

"Aug. 23. Another sacred day has come. My heart welcomes its approach. But I shall not be joyful with the dear saints in God's house of prayer. Well—let me consecrate, in my retirement, these sacred hours to him, and the glad morning will shortly dawn, when I shall engage in the sweet work of praise, with all the blood-washed throng, in my heavenly Father's kingdom."

In consequence of a leak in the ship they put into Coringa. The following is an extract from a letter to Mrs. Judson, then at Calcutta, dated Coringa, Sept. 14, 1812.

"Since I left you, my mind has been variously exercised. I have had many distressing conflicts and doubts. But at some blessed seasons, I think I have enjoyed the light of Immanuel's countenance, and have known joys too great to be expressed. I have never, since I began the Christian life, found so much satisfaction in attending on the duties of religion as lately. The return of those seasons consecrated to the worship of Jesus in private, has been attended with delight to my soul. Shall we not see some or all of you at the Isle of France? O that Providence may so order events, that we may be united in laboring among the heathen. I hope you are enjoying much of God. This alone will prepare you for future trials. Hope to see you soon. Farewell."

The following letter from Mr. Newell was received by Mrs. Atwood, Aug. 1813, dated Port Louis, Isle of France, December 10, 1812.

——"When I sit down to address you, my dear mother, from this distant land, to me a land of strangers and a place of exile, a thousand tender thoughts arise in my mind, and naturally suggest such inquiries as these. How is it now with that dear woman to whom I am indebted for my greatest earthly blessing—the mother of my dear Harriet? And mine too—for I must claim the privilege of considering you as my own dear mother. Does the candle of the Lord still shine on her tabernacle, and is the voice of joy and praise yet heard in her dwelling? Or, what is not improbable in this world of disappointment, has some new affliction, the death perhaps of a dear child, or some other beloved friend, caused her heart again to bleed, and her tears to flow? Ah! my mother, though we may live many years, and see good in them all, yet let us remember the days of darkness, for they too will be many. It is decreed by Infinite Wisdom, that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of heaven. You, my dear mother, have had your share of adversity—and I too have had mine. But we will not complain. Sanctified afflictions are the choicest favors of heaven. They cure us of our vain and foolish expectations from the world, and teach our thoughts and affections to ascend and fix on joys that never die. I never longed so much to see you, as I have these several days past. What would I now give to sit one hour by that dear fireside, where I have tasted the most unalloyed pleasure that earth affords, and recount to you, and the dear children, the perils, the toils, and the sufferings, through which I have passed since I left my native land. In this happy circle I should for a moment forget —— —— ——.

"Yes, my dear friends, I would tell you how God has disappointed our favorite schemes, and blasted our hopes of preaching Christ in India, and has sent us all away from that extensive field of usefulness, with an intimation that he has nothing for us to do there. I would tell you how he has visited us *all with sickness*, and how he has afflicted me, in particular, by taking away the dear little babe which he gave us, the child of our prayers, of our hopes, of our tears. I would tell you—but O, shall I tell it, or forbear ?——

"Have courage, my mother, God will support you under this trial; though it may for a time cause your very heart to bleed. Come, then, let us mingle our griefs and weep together, for she was dear to us both; and she too is gone. Yes; Harriet, your lovely daughter, is gone, and you will see her face no more! My own dear Harriet, the wife of my youth, and the desire of my eyes, has bid me a last farewell, and left me to mourn and weep. Yes, she is gone. I wiped the cold sweat of death from her pale, emaciated face, while we travelled together, down to the entrance of the dark valley. There she took her upward flight, and ascended to the mansions of the blessed.

"But I must hasten to give you a more particular account of the repeated afflictions with which God has visited me.

"Harriet enjoyed good health from the time we left you, until we embarked on our voyage from Calcutta to the Isle of France. The fatigue of riding in a palanquin, in that unhealthy place, threw her into a fever, which commenced the day after we were on board. She was confined about a week to her couch, but afterwards recovered, and enjoyed pretty good health. We left Calcutta on the 4th of August; but, on account of contrary winds and bad weather, we were driven about in the Bay of Bengal, with-

out making much progress during the whole of that month. On or about the 27th, it was discovered that the vessel had sprung a leak; and on the 30th the leak had increased to such an alarming degree, as to render our situation extremely perilous. A consultation of the officers was called, and it was determined to put about immediately, and make the nearest port, which was Coringa, a small town on the Coromandel coast, about sixty miles south of Vizigapatam. We got safe into port on Saturday, September 5th."

[On the 19th of September they reëmbarked, and Mrs. N. enjoyed comfortable health, till nearly three weeks after leaving Coringa, and about three weeks before reaching the Isle of France, when she became the joyful mother of a daughter. Four days after, in consequence of a severe storm of wind and rain, the child took cold, and died on the evening of the next day.]

"About a week after Mrs. N.'s confinement," says Mr. N., "I first perceived the symptoms of that disorder, which terminated in her death. She immediately recognized the disease of which her father, and several other of her family connections died, and was confident she should never recover. I endeavored to raise her hopes, and encouraged her to expect much from a change of situation. But she wished me to dismiss all expectations of her recovery, and to prepare my mind, and help her to prepare her own, for the solemn event. She told me she had some doubts respecting her state. Yet she was by no means alarmed at the idea of death, but was calm, patient, and resigned. During the last week of our passage she read through the book of Job, and, as she afterwards told me, 'found sweet relief from every fear in submitting to a sovereign God;' and could not refrain from tears of joy, that God should give her so comfortable views of death and eternity. Her health continued uniformly in a declining state, and the symptoms

of a settled consumption grew every day more and more apparent."

[Though Mr. N. feared the worst, he did not consider her case as fatal, till the last fortnight of her life, which commenced about ten days after their arrival at the Isle of France. Mr. N., immediately on their arrival, called in the aid of Dr. B. the chief surgeon of the British army in that Island, and of Dr. W., a Danish physician, a friend with whom they had become acquainted at Serampore. There was but little alteration in Mrs. N.'s health—excepting that she gradually lost strength—till about a fortnight before her death, when she declined more rapidly, and all hope of her recovery was extinguished. About 4 o'clock P. M., on Monday, Nov. 30, 1812, her eyesight failed her; soon after which, she calmly, and with apparent ease, expired—seven weeks and four days after her confinement. These events, with all the attending circumstances, are related by Mr. N. with great tenderness and particularity. He then proceeds as follows:]

"There, my dear mother, I have finished the story of Harriet's sufferings. Let us turn from the tale of woe to a brighter scene; one that will gladden your heart, as I am sure it does mine. During this long series of sufferings, she meekly yielded to the will of her heavenly Father, without one murmuring word. 'My wicked heart,' she writes, 'is *inclined* to think it hard, that I should suffer such fatigue and hardship. I sinfully envy those whose lot it is to live in tranquillity on land. Happy people! Ye know not the toils and trials of voyages across the rough and stormy deep. O, for a little Indian hut on land. But hush, my warring passions; it is for Jesus, who sacrificed the joys of his Father's kingdom, and expired on a cross to redeem a fallen world, that thus I wander from place to place, and feel nowhere at home. How reviving the

thought! How great the consolation it yields to my sinking heart! I will cherish it, and yet be happy.'

"In the first part of the sickness which succeeded the birth of our babe, she had some doubts which occasionally interrupted her spiritual comfort; but they were soon removed, and her mind was filled with that peace of God which passeth all understanding.

"I finally became convinced that she was far gone in a consumption, and told her I feared she would find a grave in the Isle of France. She seemed to be relieved of a heavy burden, when I gave her this intelligence. From this time we conversed constantly, and with the greatest freedom and plainness, respecting her death, which we now considered as certain, and near at hand. When she perceived me sorrowful, she would, with a smiling countenance and cheerful voice, endeavor to animate me with the prospect of a speedy reunion in a world where we should part no more.

"When I asked her, a few days before she died, if she had any remaining doubts respecting her spiritual state, she answered with emphasis *that she had none.* During the whole of her sickness, she talked in the most familiar manner, and with great delight, of death, and the glory that was to follow. When Dr. B. one day told her those were gloomy thoughts, she had better get rid of them, she replied, that, on the contrary, they were to her cheering and joyful, beyond what she could express. When I attempted to persuade her that she would recover—which I fondly hoped—it seemed to strike her like a disappointment. She would say, 'You ought rather to pray that I may depart, that I may be perfectly free from sin, and be where God is.'

"Her mind was from day to day filled with the most comforting and delightful views of the character of God

and Christ. She often requested me to talk to her on these interesting subjects. She told me that her thoughts were so much confused, and her mind so much weakened, by the distress of body she had suffered, that she found it difficult steadily to pursue a train of thought on divine things, but that she continually looked to God, and passively rested on him. She often spoke of meeting her friends in heaven. 'Perhaps,' said she, 'my dear mother has gone before me to heaven, and as soon as I leave this body, I shall find myself with her.' At another time she said, 'We often talk of meeting our friends in heaven; but what would heaven be with all our friends, if God were not there?'

"She longed exceedingly for the brethren to arrive from India, that we might form ourselves into a church, and celebrate the dying love of Jesus once more before she died. Her desires to enjoy the benefit of this ordinance were so strong, and our situation so peculiar, that I thought a deviation from the usage of our churches in this instance would be justifiable, and accordingly, on the last Sabbath in November, the day before she died, I gave her the symbols of the body and blood of our Lord; and I trust it was a comfortable season to us both.

"A few days before she died, after one of those distressing turns of coughing and raising phlegm, which so rapidly wasted her strength, she called me to come and sit on her bed beside her, and receive her dying message to her friends. She observed, that her strength was quite exhausted, and she could say only a few words; but feared she should not have another opportunity. 'Tell my dear mother,' said she, 'how much Harriet loved her. Tell her to look to God, and keep near to him, and He will support and comfort her in all her trials. I shall meet her in heaven, for surely she is one of the dear children of God.' She

then turned to her brothers and sisters: 'Tell them,' said she, 'from the lips of their dying sister, that there is nothing but religion worth living for. O exhort them to attend immediately to the care of their precious, immortal souls. Tell them not to delay repentance. The eldest of them will be anxious to know how I now feel with respect to missions. Tell them, and also my dear mother, that I have never regretted leaving my native land for the cause of Christ. Let my dear brothers and sisters know I love them to the last. I hope to meet them in heaven; but O, if I should not'— here tears burst from her eyes, and her sobs of grief at the thought of an eternal separation, expressed feelings that were too big for utterance. After she had recovered a little from the shock which these strong emotions had given to her whole frame, she attempted to speak of several other friends; but was obliged to sum up all she had to say in 'Love and an affectionate farewell to them all.' Within a day or two of her death, such conversations as the following passed between us:

"Should you not be willing to recover, and live a while longer here?

"'On some accounts it would be desirable. I wish to do something for God before I die. But the experience I have had of the deceitfulness of my heart leads me to expect, that if I should recover, my future life would be much the same as my past has been, and I long to be perfectly free from sin. God has called me away before we have entered upon the work of the mission, but the case of David affords me comfort. I have had it in my heart to do what I can for the heathen, and I hope God will accept me.'

"But what shall I do, when you are gone? How can I bear the separation?

"'Jesus will be your best friend, and our separation

will be short. We shall soon, very soon, meet in a better world; if I thought we should not, it would be painful indeed to part with you.'

"How does your past life appear to you now?

"'Bad enough; but that only makes the grace of Christ appear the more glorious.

'Jesus, thy blood and righteousness,
My beauty are, my heavenly dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.'

"As I stood by her bedside, about nine in the evening previous to her decease, perceiving that she was failing very fast, I told her I wished to take my leave of her, before her speech and recollection left her. She raised her eyes to look at me once more, gave me her hand, already chilled with death, and with a feeble voice, said, 'Farewell—we shall soon meet again—Jesus will be your friend.'

"When I told her that she could not live through the next day, she replied, 'O joyful news; I long to depart.' Some time after, I said to her, 'How does death appear to you now?' She replied, 'Glorious; truly welcome.' During Sabbath night she seemed to be a little wandering; but the next morning she had her recollection perfectly. As I stood by her, I asked if she knew me. At first she made no answer. I said to her again, 'My dear Harriet, do you know who I am?' 'My dear Mr. Newell, my husband,' was her reply; but in broken accents, and a voice faltering in death.

"The last words which I remember, and which I think were the last she uttered, relative to her departure, were these: 'The pains, the groans, the dying strife'—'How long, O Lord, how long?'

"But I must stop; for I have already exceeded the

bounds of a letter, though I have come far short of doing justice to the dying deportment of this dear friend. O may my last end be like hers. I would now proceed to discharge the duty, which Harriet's dying request imposed on me, of administering consolation to you, and of beseeching the dear children to make a right improvement of this afflicting dispensation; but I hope the God of all consolation will himself wipe away your tears, and fill your heart with comfort, and that Harriet's dying entreaties, and tears, and sighs, may be carried by the Spirit of truth to the hearts of the children, and of her other young friends, and may fasten conviction on their minds, and engage them to follow her so far as she followed Christ. With these hopes, I must bid them all an affectionate farewell.

"S. NEWELL."

Mr. N. enclosed a fragment—from which the following sentences are taken—in Mrs. N.'s own hand. It is the commencement of a letter which she began to write to her mother, but which she was never able to resume.

"PORT LOUIS, ISLE OF FRANCE, Nov. 3, 1812.

"MY EVER DEAR MOTHER—Since I wrote you last, I have been called by God to rejoice and weep; for afflictions and mercies have both alternately fallen to my lot. I address you now from a bed of great weakness—perhaps for the last time. Yes, my dear mamma, I feel this mud-walled cottage shake, and expect ere long to become an inhabitant of the world of spirits. Eternity I feel is just at hand. But let me give you some account of God's dealings with me, which I shall do at intervals, as strength will admit."

The following extract completes the affecting history of Mrs. Newell.

"Her remains were conveyed, on the 1st of December, to the burying-ground in Port Louis, followed only by myself and another gentleman, and interred in a retired spot beneath the shade of an evergreen.

Till Christ shall come to rouse the slumbering dead,
Farewell, pale, lifeless clay, a long farewell!
Sweet be thy sleep beneath *that green tree's shade*,
Where I have laid thee in thy lowly cell.
Adieu, dear Harriet; thou shalt sigh no more;
Thy conflict's ended, and thy toils are past;
Thy weary pilgrimage on earth is o'er,
And thou hast reached thy wished for home at last.
Loosed from thy prison earth, I saw thee rise
To realms of light beyond these lower skies;
There I behold thee in thy blest abode,
Mid kindred spirits, near thy Father God.
'But me not destined yet thy bliss to share,
My prime of life in wand'ring spent, and care,
My duty calls to traverse realms alone,
And find no spot of all the world my own.'
'Yet when this varying scene of life is o'er,
O may I meet thee on that blissful shore,
Where friends shall never part, farewells be heard no more.'"

The homeless, sorrowing, lone writer of the above, soon after the interment of his beloved Harriet, left the Isle of France for Ceylon. After a residence of ten months in this island, he departed to join his American brethren in Bombay, and united with them in laboring for the salvation of the surrounding heathen. Here, after seven short years, his compassionate Saviour drew near, and called him to his rest in heaven, where we trust he enjoys a happy reunion with her, whose Christian walk and godlike converse, while on earth, did much to ripen him for heavenly bliss.

"Short toils, short woes, loved friends, were thine;
Now, joys eternal and divine."

Inscription by Rev. Dr. Worcester, late Secretary of the American Board for Foreign Missions, on the monument erected over the grave of Mrs. Newell, in the Isle of France.

Sacred to the Memory

OF

MRS. HARRIET ATWOOD,

WIFE OF

REV. SAMUEL NEWELL,

MISSIONARY AT BOMBAY.

BORN,

HAVERHILL, MASS., U. S. A., OCTOBER 10, 1793;

DIED,

AFTER A DISTRESSING VOYAGE FROM INDIA TO THIS PLACE, NOVEMBER 30, 1812.

EARLY DEVOTED TO CHRIST, HER HEART BURNED FOR THE HEATHEN—FOR THEM SHE LEFT HER KINDRED AND HER NATIVE LAND, AND WELCOMED DANGER AND SUFFERINGS.

OF EXCELLENT UNDERSTANDING, RICH IN ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND VIRTUES, SHE WAS THE DELIGHT OF HER FRIENDS, A CROWN TO HER HUSBAND, AND AN ORNAMENT TO THE MISSIONARY CAUSE.

HER SHORT LIFE WAS BRIGHT, HER DEATH FULL OF GLORY.

HER NAME LIVES,

AND IN ALL CHRISTIAN LANDS IS PLEADING WITH IRRESISTIBLE ELOQUENCE

FOR THE HEATHEN.

THIS HUMBLE MONUMENT TO HER MEMORY

IS ERECTED BY THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

No. 170.

SIMPLICITY IN DRESS.

The humble followers of the Lord Jesus have often observed with painful solicitude, the love of splendid personal decorations which appears in many of his professed friends. This is a temptation to which almost all are exposed; but I would now invite to it the particular attention of *Christian females, who indulge a hope in Christ.*

When God condescended to enter into covenant with us, and seal us, as we hope, by his Holy Spirit, and we gave ourselves away to him, did we make any reserve? Was any idol retained in our hearts, which we did not sincerely wish to be cast out? Was not our adorable Redeemer exalted supreme Lord of our affections? Was not the language of our souls, "Lord, I surrender myself unto thee, take thou the purchase of thine own blood; henceforth I consider nothing as my own, but consecrate my body, soul, and spirit to be thine for ever?"

And have our obligations become less than when we first "tasted that the Lord is gracious?" We have, perhaps, for years experienced the immutability of his gracious covenant. When we have "broken his statutes, and kept not his commandments," then he has, in mercy, "visited our transgressions with the rod, and our iniquities with stripes; nevertheless, his loving kindness has he not utterly taken away, nor suffered his faithfulness to fail."

But is it consistent with our character as "*strangers and pilgrims on the earth,*" whose affections are placed not on things below, but on "things above," to be pleased with toys and trifles? Can a mind enslaved by the fashions and

extravagances of this world, daily hold exalted intercourse with heaven? Can we prostrate ourselves before the Majesty of the universe, and pray, "O God, create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me; deliver me from the allurements of this world; make me a meek and humble follower of the meek and lowly Jesus; help me to evince to the world the transforming efficacy of the Spirit of grace, in raising my affections to thee, and in leading me to universal obedience and love of thy commands"—can such be the language of our hearts in our retirement, when we go from the closet to the dressing table, and from the dressing table to the closet? If we would enjoy the smiles of our Saviour, if we would hold communion with the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we must "avoid even the appearance of evil." We must take the *word of God* as the sufficient and only rule of our faith and practice. But St. Paul says, in his instructions to Timothy, he would "that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but," which becometh women professing godliness, "with good works." Equally explicit is St. Peter. When declaring the duty of wives, he says, "Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

When exhibited in her native purity, "bringing forth fruits meet for repentance," how preëminently lovely does religion appear! Would you behold her in her most attractive mien: picture to yourself a young and pious female —her bosom glowing with love to God and man. A noble simplicity characterizes her whole appearance, and bespeaks the elevation of a soul which drinks deeply of the spirit of "just men made perfect," in heaven. Her brow, unruffled,

is meekly expressive of that peace and tranquillity which come from holy communion with God. In her daily walk, mark the cheerful alacrity with which she fulfils the various domestic duties of her station: see her frequenting the abodes of wretchedness and want, clothing the naked with garments which her own hands have made, pouring the balm of consolation into the bosom of the afflicted, or kneeling by the bed of disease and death, invoking mercy for the guilty, or pointing the expiring penitent to the mansions of peace.

But there is still another and a powerful incitement to obey the instructions of Scripture. By retrenching superfluous expenses, we shall be able to do much, in obedience to the last, the great command of our Saviour, to send *his Gospel to every creature.* That glorious time, so long predicted by prophets and righteous men, begins to dawn. The slumber of ages is broken. The church is about to arise. The world *never before* witnessed such measures for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. In this glorious cause, wealth, rank, and talents are enlisted. In this glorious cause, all holy beings are interested. Great things have been attempted, and great things will be accomplished; but they will not be accomplished without the strenuous and self-denying exertions of God's people. And have you conscientiously practised all that self-denial which supreme love to your adorable Saviour demands? Calculate the amount of good which might have been effected by the price of expensive apparel, had it been expended in supporting some missionary in pagan lands, in the gratuitous distribution of Bibles or Tracts, or in aiding any of those numerous benevolent institutions which are the harbingers of a bright, a glorious day.

Though but one soul were rescued from the thraldom of Satan, washed in a Saviour's blood, how infinitely would it transcend the value of this material universe! The time is

coming, when to have been the humble instrument of turning one soul from the error of his ways, will yield a pure delight, which the enlarged capacities of glorified spirits only can sustain. Little will it avail you, when standing before the dread tribunal of God, that the habiliments of your mortal state were rich and splendid! Are you content to be saved as by fire? Would you not rather that an abundant entrance should be ministered unto you, into the everlasting kingdom of your God and Saviour? Then learn to follow Christ in the regeneration. Learn to take up your cross daily. Contemplate the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of that love which drew the Son of God from the bosom of his Father, and offered him a voluntary sacrifice for sin. Behold him living, dying, rising, ascending, that he may disarm death of his sting, that he may "proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Yea, contemplate this "mystery of godliness," this matchless, this unparalleled love. And will you then, when the full tide of grateful affection rushes upon your heart, go and expend the bounties of an indulgent Providence in the gratification of sinful and ignoble passions? Will you then virtually continue to say to the heathen, "Remain in your present state of degradation and death; I cannot spare one ornament from my apparel, or one hour which I have devoted to pleasure; still give that worship which is due to God only, to your shameless idols, till another generation arise who shall feel the force of the Saviour's command, and deny themselves the pleasures of this life, that they may spread his Gospel?" Nay, rather listen to the heavenly voice, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your soul. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

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No. 171.

PARENTAL FAITHFULNESS.

The relation between parents and children involves all the relations of human society. By the institution of marriage, mankind are divided into little societies, on which depend the character and condition of larger communities. These family associations are closely connected by natural affection, and have peculiar advantages and strong inducements to discharge with fidelity every duty which they owe to each other. From the tendency of first impressions on children, to stamp their future opinions and character, God has ordained that truth and piety should, in great measure, be continued on earth by means of *parental faithfulness.* "For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." Psalm 78: 5–7. This divine establishment has been more or less recognized in every age of the Church; and we may now contemplate it among the principal means of reforming the world, and introducing the day of millennial glory.

How pleasing is the work assigned to parents—how momentous the trust committed to their hands! These dear children God hath given them, to be trained up for him—for heaven. Whatever is done to them, is done for him, or against him, as it may be good or bad, as it tends

to save or destroy the soul for ever. How should those, who are entrusted with this immortal charge, give the utmost heed, lest they be found guilty of ruining for ever the dearest objects of their affection. In doing this, parents should,

1. Lead their children by a *holy example.* A child will much sooner observe and imitate the actions of others, than receive instruction from their lips. The first thing, therefore, which can be done for children is, to set them a good example. This is the first and almost the only means of a child's improvement, in the state of infancy; and by it the character and life are, in a great measure, formed. How soon will a child catch the expression, and imitate the motions of a fond mother! And how will its growing years exhibit, either in playful mood, or in a settled course of conduct, fruits of the impressions it received under parental care. How aptly will it copy after others; and justify its conduct by its corresponding with theirs. Parents should be extremely cautious what they say and do before their children. They should uniformly exercise that kindness, forbearance, patience, contentment, and good will, which they would rejoice to see in their beloved offspring. They should always conduct towards each other, and towards their children, as they would desire to see them conducting in years of maturity. But how can this be done, unless parents are truly pious? How can they lead others in a way which they themselves know not; and in which they do not walk? How can they consistently recommend, or even inculcate, the religious duties which they do not perform? And what a ready excuse will their children have for neglecting these duties. Will not actions, rather than words, be accounted the language of the heart, and the rule to be observed? What manner of persons, then, parents, should you be, in all holy conversation and godliness! How should you die unto sin and live unto righteousness, by faith on the Son of God. Avoiding every

thing sinful in temper and practice, how should you walk in all God's commandments and ordinances, as heirs of the grace of life. And how much greater concern should you manifest for the spiritual, than for the temporal interests of your children.

2. Parental faithfulness also implies the *due government* of children. This most essentially consists in *restraint* and *correction*. Children early manifest a selfish, proud, and stubborn disposition. They are unwilling, in many instances, to obey and submit to the authority of their parents. But they will relinquish one object for another, according as they realize or fear the painful consequences of one, and enjoy or expect the benefit of the other. This seems to be the general process of human action, in all the departments of life—even in the different stages of religious concern and conviction for sin, it is observable, till the soul gives up all for Christ. *Then* it is delivered, by the Holy Spirit, from supreme selfishness, and renewed to genuine benevolence. But, previously to this change in his affections, the child will not forsake the wrong, and do the right, without being made deeply sensible of *the consequences*. Here, then, is a fixed principle, on which to proceed in governing children. On the one hand, they must be deterred from disobedience, and, on the other hand, allured to obedience, by the effects which will follow.

The importance of duly *restraining* children appears, from its being much easier to *prevent* evil habits, than it is afterwards to eradicate them. Let the prevailing propensity of a child be discovered, and be subdued, or regulated by a proper control, and the government of subordinate passions will be comparatively easy. Restraining means are generally used to guard children against theft and murder; and by frequently presenting the evil and danger of these crimes, multitudes are deterred. But all sins are equally against God, and expose the soul to his wrath. Many sins are likewise injurious to society; and every trans-

gression should be prevented, as much as possible, by suitable restraints. Wishes must often be denied, and inclinations crossed, for the child's good. But the reason of this should be clearly shown, that the child may act from proper motives, and be trained to self-government. Selfishness, revenge, covetousness, pride, and other evil passions, should be very early checked, by presenting suitable considerations to the mind. To allow a child to seek revenge, or to retaliate an injury, is to cherish in his bosom a cruel, malicious disposition, to make him a duellist—a murderer. Let the child be rather excited to show a noble forbearance, and to overcome evil with good—to suffer wrong, rather than do wrong. This is the noblest conquest which he can gain. "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."

Children should be prohibited from frequenting haunts of vice, and from freely associating with vicious characters, from reading pernicious books, and from profaning the Sabbath and the name of God. Eli was sorely chastised, because he knew his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. Every propensity to "foolish talking and jesting," to irreverence and disrespect of God and divine things, should be discountenanced. Nor should the natural inclinations of children be indulged, to the loss, or even injury of their souls. What is the indulgence of their inclinations, compared with their everlasting salvation? Who would gratify the inordinate desire of his child, by giving him poison, rather than wholesome food? In such cases, the child knows not his danger, and should submit entirely to his parents, as the appointed guardians of his best, his eternal interests. He that loveth his son, will restrain him from evil.

Correction of children is also for their good. This consists in the punishment of their faults. Restraint is sometimes disregarded; and then more effectual measures become

necessary. "The rod and reproof give wisdom. He that spareth the rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." Prov. 13: 24. The child should evidently respect his parents, and submit to their authority. If the parent does not govern his child, his child will govern him. But the cheerful submission of the child is greatly to his benefit, as well as to the parent's comfort. Let this be effected, and a steady, regular, and determined course will generally secure the object of parental government, without severer measures. A few rules, well observed, will answer a better purpose than many that are neglected. To threaten, but not inflict a punishment, when manifestly deserved, or to promise, but not bestow a reward, when merited, is dealing falsely with children, and teaching them to deal falsely one with another. It also destroys the parent's authority, and the child's confidence in his word. Nor should children ever be terrified into submission and obedience, by false and frightful representations. The truth, and even the rod, is vastly better. Nor should parents ever show the child their own weakness, by appealing to each other, or by threatening to call in the aid of their minister, or schoolmaster, or some neighbor, who has more authority than they. For the child will readily discover that they need assistance, even in their own view; and seeing their weakness, he will triumph in the prospect of victory. There are undoubtedly cases of stubbornness, which require corporal punishment. "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying. Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest." The rod is one means of giving wisdom.

Another thing worthy of notice in the government of children, is a *wise discrimination between faults of different kinds.* If no difference be made between those which arise from playful feelings and heedlessness, and those proceeding from a mischievous and stubborn disposition, the child will be discouraged in his endeavors to please. He will see

the unreasonableness of such indiscriminate blame and correction. He will be irritated, and his mind be soured, and callous to reproof. "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Provoke not your children to wrath." Never administer correction in a passion, lest a want of consideration and tenderness should destroy its influence. But to render it effectual, let it be administered with unyielding firmness, as well as genuine affection.

The Rev. Thomas Scott was decided in his opinion of the propriety and necessity of correction, as the appointment of God. At the same time, he thought it need by no means be frequent, if it were properly administered. He would not have it applied for small faults—for what resulted from childish levity and inconsideration—but for what was wilful, rebellious, or immoral. A child should not be punished for being a *child*, but for being a *wicked* child. He said that, to establish his authority, it generally cost him a sharp contest; sometimes more than one; but when it was once settled that he, and not the child, was master, the path was ever comparatively smooth and easy. And it was ever a rule with him, that from the time children became capable of making their wants known in any other way, they were to obtain nothing by crying for it, or by any other misconduct. To indulge them in this way he considered as bribing them to behave ill.

That family government may become easy, salutary, and effectual, the *parents must harmonize* in the administration, or they will embarrass and hinder each other, and the child will receive no benefit. United, they stand; divided, they fall.

3. The *religious instruction* of children is an essential part of parental faithfulness. "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." "And these words which I command thee, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou

walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. Set your heart unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe, to do all the words of this law." How incumbent is the duty on parents to be diligent in explaining to their children the truths, precepts, ordinances, and history of Scripture; in helping them to derive instruction from the occurrences of Providence; and in encouraging their inquiries by giving them plain, familiar, and full answers: endeavoring by every means to show them the nature, reasonableness, and advantages of true religion; and confirming the whole by their own example, united with an affectionate exercise of their authority, and fervent prayers for and with them. On this general view of parental instruction in religion, it may be observed,

1. That parents should early and perseveringly teach their children the *doctrines and duties* of our holy religion. At an early age, children are capable of understanding some important things revealed in the Scriptures. They may be taught the being, perfections, and government of God; the perfect requisitions of his law; the fallen and guilty state of all men by nature; the only way of recovery and eternal life through Jesus Christ; the necessity of a change of heart by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and also of repentance towards God, and faith in Christ, which shall be followed by universal obedience to divine commands. These things should be taught them in a plain, easy, and affectionate manner, for the purpose of making them sensible that they are sinners, and exposed to the wrath of a just and holy God for their sins; that they need his abounding mercy and grace, through the mediation and atoning sacrifice of his only-begotten Son; and that they must seek the Lord while he may be found. The immediate necessity and duty of repentance and a life of faith on the Son of God, should be tenderly and soberly urged on children, by a consideration of the shortness of time, the certainty of death, the happi-

ness of saints, and the misery of the finally impenitent, to all eternity. By these things, parents should very affectionately persuade their children to forsake the ways of sin and endless ruin, and enter on the way of holiness and everlasting life. But their whole dependence must be on the Spirit of God. It is only by his special grace, that their endeavors will be happily succeeded. This should be constantly felt both by parents and children. In proportion as it is felt, will be their encouragement. "Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee." "He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great."

There are very important reasons for teaching children the leading truths of divine revelation. Let their minds be preöccupied with truth, and they will be secured against error. The neglected garden will soon be filled with noxious weeds. But let it be sown with good seed, and kept with care, and the weeds are excluded. And must not the seeds of piety be early and diligently sown in the youthful mind, and watched with much tender solicitude, that plants of righteousness may spring up, by the grace of God, to the glory of his name? How else can you expect the intrusion and immoral tendency of error to be prevented? It is by seasonably storing the minds of children with divine truth, that they will learn their several duties to God, to their parents, to one another, and to all with whom they are connected. They will also become sensible of their obligations, and of the consequences of their conduct: that happiness will be the effect of obedience, and misery the effect of disobedience. In this way, the truth may be made, by the Spirit of God, to bear deeply on their minds, convincing them of sin, and of the endless punishment which awaits them in the eternal world; and powerfully urging them to forsake all their evil ways, and to return to the Lord, that they may be holy and happy for ever. But how can they be born again *through the truth*, and sanctified through the truth, except they are taught it? The law of the Lord is

perfect, converting the soul, by God's writing it in the heart. But who can look for this effect in the neglect of religious instruction? Who can expect a blessing on his neglect of duty!

2. The *providences* of God should be impressed on the minds of children. God speaks by them, as well as by his word. "His judgments are a light, that goeth forth. Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth." We should beware of interpreting the severe and afflictive dispensations of Providence as indicating that the greatest sufferers here are always the greatest sinners; but still we may teach our children, that pain, and sickness, and the multitude of other evils which fall under their observation, are the tokens of God's hatred of sin; and we may adduce many examples, from Scripture and other history, to show that the ways of wisdom are the ways of peace and durable prosperity, and that the "way of transgressors is hard." Children should be instructed how to regard the providences of God in the light of his word. By the various evils, natural and moral, which they see, they should be more impressively taught the evil of sin, the danger of impenitence, and the necessity of repentance; and be excited to love, and fear, and praise the Lord, who is so merciful as well as righteous. Instances of death should be wisely improved. The vanity of riches and all earthly distinctions should be inculcated; and all feelings of pride on account of them should be suppressed. They should never think themselves more deserving of blessings than others; but be taught to receive all their good things as expressions of God's mercy, and to feel their increased obligations to live to his praise, to serve and glorify him according to the talents which are given them. Nor should they be allowed to envy the rich and gay, or to repine at the prosperity of others; but be taught to be humble, contented, and thankful, in the situation where God has placed them. They should be accustomed to acknowledge the

hand of God in all events; constantly remembering that he doeth according to his will in heaven and among the inhabitants of our world; that he numbers the hairs of our head; and that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

3. Children should be taught that they are always *in the presence of God*, and that he perfectly knows all their thoughts, and desires, and intentions, and words, and actions. Are children cautious how they behave in the presence of their parents? Let them remember that One infinitely greater is always with them. From him they can conceal nothing; and he abhors every thing that is evil. How should they fear to offend him; and how solicitous should they be to do that which is pleasing in his sight. He will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing; and punish the wicked with everlasting destruction, while the righteous shall inherit, through Jesus Christ, eternal life.

4. Children should be instructed in reference to the *ministry of reconciliation and the institutions of the Gospel.* They will soon be removed from the care and control of their parents, and will need other means of moral culture. And indeed these will be very useful to them while under parental discipline. The Gospel ministry is designed to aid parents in training them up in the way in which they should go. This aid will be cheerfully given by ministers who love Christ and feel a tender solicitude for the rising generation. And parents who are wise and faithful to their children, will teach them to esteem the ministers of Christ very highly in love, for their works' sake; and to regard them as their friends, who love them and seek their best interests. This will prepare children to attend with profit on the public and private instructions of ministers, to remember the Sabbath, to esteem the house of God, to reverence his name and ordinances, and to seek heavenly wisdom. Early habits of this kind will, by the grace of God, be of immense benefit to children through life, and even for ever. But how can parents expect their children to be

profited by the ministers of Christ, or even by his Gospel, if *they* treat them with disrespect, or speak evil of them and their ministrations before their children? What would more tend to counteract the influence of the Gospel, and to destroy their souls? Nor should they ever make use of their minister's name and authority to overawe or terrify a child into submission. This is teaching children not to think of their minister with affection and respect, but with aversion and dread. And how could they then attend with delight to his counsel? Parents should also coöperate with their faithful minister in laboring to impress on their children's minds the truths and duties which he inculcates.

Private instructors and teachers of schools should be selected with great care. Their principles and habits will have a mighty influence in forming the sentiments and character of their pupils. How momentous are the consequences of what they daily instil into the young and tender mind! Will it not, in the day of judgment, appear infinitely important, that children should have had the instruction, example, and prayers of teachers who were truly pious, besides being well qualified in other respects?

The principles and conduct of children will also be greatly affected by the books they read, and the companions they choose. Here will be much occasion for parental advice and direction. No faithful parent can overlook these things.

5. The instruction of children should be attended with *humble, fervent prayer*. In faith and hope, parents should pray often and earnestly for the blessing of God to attend their feeble endeavors, and succeed the means of his own appointment. Children should be taught, in like manner, to wait on God for his blessing. That this prayer may be acceptable to God, and effectual in procuring his blessing, it should be offered in the name of Christ, and by the Holy Ghost. It should also correspond with the exceedingly rich and gracious promises which God has given. "Ask,

and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find. If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

What parent must not feel the importance of the duties which he owes to his children? How must a sense of the value of their souls, and of the evils to which they are exposed, inspire him with feelings not easily described. How can he meet them at the bar of God, if he is unfaithful, and they perish through his neglect? How can he bear their accusations? How can he dwell with them in everlasting burnings? How must the sight of them increase his endless misery!

Let every parent be entreated, by the relation he sustains to his children, by the affection he feels towards them, by his obligations to train them up for God and the account he must render to his Judge, by the influence he may have in saving or ruining them for ever, by their honor and happiness on the one hand, and by their disgrace and wretchedness on the other, and by all the solemnities of the future judgment and the endless state of reward and punishment, to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Be faithful; and the grace of God will be with you. For he hath said, "Oh that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children for ever."

No. 172.

A TIME TO DANCE.

A BALL having occurred in the parish of a worthy minister, at a season of peculiar seriousness among the youth of his pastoral charge, and many of them, from conscientious motives, having declined to attend, their absence was attributed, erroneously, to the influence and interference of their pastor, who, in consequence, received the following anonymous note:

"SIR—Obey the voice of holy Scripture. Take the following for your text, and contradict it. Show in what consists the evil of that innocent amusement of dancing. Eccles. 3 : 4: 'A time to weep, and a time to laugh: a time to mourn, and a time to dance.'

"A TRUE CHRISTIAN, BUT NO HYPOCRITE."

The minister immediately wrote the following reply, which, as the note was anonymous and without address, remained in his own possession for some time, when he communicated it to the public, thinking it might meet the eye and correct the opinions of the writer of the note and others:

MY DEAR SIR—Your request that I would preach from Eccles. 3 : 4, I cannot comply with at present, since there are some Christian duties more important than dancing, which a part of my people seem disposed to neglect. Whenever I perceive, however, that the duty of dancing is too much neglected, I shall not fail to raise a warning voice against so dangerous an omission. In the mean time, there are certain difficulties in the text which you commend to my notice, the solution of which I should receive with gratitude from "a true Christian."

My first difficulty respects the *time* for dancing; for, although the text declares that there is a time to dance, yet when that time is, it does not determine. Now this point I wish to ascertain exactly, before I preach upon the subject; for it would be as criminal, I conclude, to dance at the wrong time, as to neglect to dance at the right time. I

have been able to satisfy myself, in some particulars, when it is *not* "a time to dance." We shall agree, I presume, that on the Sabbath-day, or at a funeral, or during the prevalence of a pestilence, or the rocking of an earthquake, or the roaring of a thunder-storm, it would be no time to dance. If we were condemned to die, and were waiting in prison the day of execution, this would be no time for dancing; and if our feet stood on a slippery place beside a precipice, we should not dare to dance.

But suppose the very day to be ascertained; is the whole day, or only a part, to be devoted to this amusement? And if a part of the day only, then which part is "the time to dance?" From the notoriously pernicious effects of "*night meetings*," in all ages, both upon morals and health, no one will pretend that the *evening* is the "time to dance;" and perhaps it may not be immaterial which portion of the daylight is devoted to that innocent amusement. But allowing the *time* to be ascertained, there is still an obscurity in the text. Is it a *command* to dance, or only a *permission?* Or is it merely a declaration of the fact, that, as men are constituted, there is a time when all the events alluded to in the text do, in the providence of God, come to pass? If the text be a command, is it of universal obligation; and must "old men and maidens, young men and children," dance obedience? If a permission, does it imply a permission also to refrain from dancing, if any are disposed? Or, if the text be merely a declaration that there is a time when men do dance, as there is a time when they die, then I might as well be requested to take the first eight verses of the chapter, and show in what consists the evil of those innocent practices of hating, and making war, and killing men, for which, it seems from the text, there is "a time," as well as for dancing.

There is still another difficulty in the text, which just now occurs to me. What *kind* of dancing does the text intend? for it is certainly a matter of no small consequence to "a true Christian," to dance in a scriptural manner, as well as at the scriptural time.

Now, to avoid mistakes on a point of such importance, I have consulted every passage in the Bible which speaks of dancing; the most important of which permit me to submit to your inspection.

Exod. 15: 20. "And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her, with timbrels and with dances." This was on account of the overthrow of the Egyptians in the Red Sea.

Judges 11 : 34. The daughter of Jephthah "came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances." This was also on account of a victory over the enemies of Israel.

Judges 21 : 21. The yearly feast in Shiloh was a feast unto the Lord, in which the daughters of Shiloh went forth in dances. This was done as an act of religious worship.

2 Sam. 6 : 14 and 20. "And David danced before the Lord with all his might." But the irreligious Michal "came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!" Dancing, it seems, was a sacred rite, and was usually performed by women. At that day, it was perverted from its sacred use by none but "vain fellows," destitute of shame. David vindicates himself from her irony, by saying, "It was before the Lord;" admitting, that had this *not* been the case, her rebuke would have been merited.

1 Sam. 18 : 6. On account of the victory of Saul and David over the Philistines, "the women came out of all the cities of Israel singing and dancing."

Psalm 149 : 3. "Let them praise his name in the dance." Psalm 30 : 11. "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing." The deliverance here spoken of was a recovery from sickness, and the dancing an expression of religious gratitude and joy.

Exod. 32 : 19. "As soon as he came nigh unto the camp, he saw the calf and the dancing." From this it appears that dancing was a part also of idol worship.

Jer. 31 : 4. "Oh virgin of Israel, thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and go forth in the dances of them that make merry." This passage predicts the return from captivity, and the restoration of the Divine favor, with the consequent expression of religious joy.

Matt. 11 : 17. "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented." That is, neither the judgments nor the mercies of God produced any effect upon this incorrigible generation. They neither mourn when called to mourning by his providence, nor rejoice with the usual tokens of religious joy, when his mercies demand their gratitude.

Luke 15 : 25. "Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came, and drew nigh unto the house, he heard music and dancing." The return of the prodigal was a joyful event, for which the grateful father, according to the usages of the Jewish church

and the exhortation of the Psalmist, "praised the Lord in the dance."

Eccles. 3 : 4. "A time to mourn, and a time to dance." Since the Jewish church knew nothing of dancing, except as a religious ceremony, or as an expression of gratitude and praise, the text is a declaration, that the providence of God sometimes demands mourning, and sometimes gladness and gratitude.

Matt. 14 : 6. "But when Herod's birth-day was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod." In this case dancing was perverted from its original object, to purposes of vanity and ostentation.

Job 21 : 7. "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?" Verse 11, 13–15. "They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him: and what profit shall we have, if we pray unto him?" Their wealth and dancing are assigned as the reason of their saying unto God, "Depart from us," and of their not desiring the knowledge of his ways, and not delighting to serve him, or pray to him.

From the preceding quotations, it will sufficiently appear,

1. That dancing was a religious act, both of the true and also of idol worship.

2. That it was practised exclusively on joyful occasions, such as national festivals or great victories.

3. That it was performed by maidens only.

4. That it was performed usually in the daytime, in the open air, in highways, fields, or groves.

5. That men who perverted dancing from a sacred use to purposes of amusement, were deemed infamous.

6. That no instances of dancing are found upon record in the Bible, in which the two sexes united in the exercise, either as an act of worship or amusement.

7. That there is no instance upon record of social dancing for amusement, except that of the "vain fellows," devoid of shame; of the irreligious families described by Job, which produced increased impiety, and ended in destruction; and of Herodias, which terminated in the rash vow of Herod, and the murder of John the Baptist.

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No. 173.

THE

CROSS OF CHRIST.

The refined system of religion which is at this day adopted by many, is unsuitable to the case of anxious, guilty criminals. It is insufficient to give substantial peace to a wounded conscience; insufficient to furnish a proper reply to that most important of all inquiries, "What must I do to be saved?"

But the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is richly adapted to answer these important purposes. It directs us to the death of the Divine Saviour, in our stead, as the sovereign remedy for all the evils which sin has introduced. The Cross of Christ is the grand source of relief which it proposes to our consideration. It is this which distinguishes the religion of Jesus from every other religion professed in the world.

It may be needful just to observe, before we proceed, that the Redeemer of men suffered death on a sort of gibbet, called a cross. With the Greeks, the Romans, and some other nations, this was a punishment inflicted on the vilest slaves, who had been guilty of notorious offences. It was shameful, painful, and lingering. The criminal was first scourged with cords. These cords had frequently sharp pointed bones fixed to their ends. The sufferer then bore his cross to the place of execution. There, his clothes being stripped off, his body was stretched upon the timber

his hands nailed to the cross-beam, and his feet to the lower part. The cross was then raised, and fixed in the ground; the nails, driven through the most sensitive parts of the body, and sustaining its weight, rendered the pain exquisite beyond expression. Yet it was sometimes two or three days before the persons expired. The legs of the two thieves crucified with our Redeemer were broken, to hasten their end, for a reason assigned by the Jews. When they came to Jesus, they found that he was dead already, and they marvelled at it. This was probably owing to the overwhelming sorrows of his holy soul, the weight of human guilt, and the insupportable strokes of avenging justice. He was oppressed and afflicted in a manner that cannot be described. Hence his piercing cry, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

The cross of Christ denotes not merely the timber to which he was nailed, and on which he expired, but his crucifixion upon it; the death which he died for sinners, and the way of salvation which he opened for them through his blood. The publication of this is called *the preaching of the cross.* 1 Cor. 1 : 18. To suffer persecution for maintaining this doctrine, is to suffer persecution for the cross of Christ; and to glory in salvation by Jesus, is to glory in his cross. Gal. 6 : 12, 14.

This, then, is the subject we are to consider—a subject too wonderful, and too copious, for our feeble powers. All we can say, and especially in so narrow a compass, will fall far beneath the dignity and sublimity of it. We shall only remind you, with simplicity and plainness, that the cross of Christ is, to those who believe, the fulfilment of divine purposes and predictions—the sum of the Gospel—the salvation of sinners—the conquest of all enemies—the foun-

dation of hope—the ground of triumph—the display of the divine perfections—and the grand incentive to holiness.

1. The cross of Christ is the *fulfilment of divine purposes, prophecies, and promises.* The thoughts and counsels of the God of all grace were, from everlasting, employed on the grand design which was accomplished by the Redeemer's death. He is styled "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The purposes of the Father in Christ Jesus our Lord, are said to be eternal. When he was delivered up to be crucified, it was according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

What a series of prophecies, of visions, of types, and of promises, was accomplished in the cross of Christ! In this great centre they all met. From Moses to Malachi, the Spirit of God, in all the prophets, testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. The oracles of heaven, through succeeding generations, referred to the cross of Christ.

In this the Mosaic rites and ordinances, types and symbols, had their accomplishment. If we consider them not in this light, what are they all but pompous and unmeaning institutions, utterly unworthy the wisdom of their great Author? What significancy could there be in the shedding of so much blood, the slaughtering of so many innocent victims, the consuming of so much flesh, if the whole were not to teach us, that without the shedding of Jesus' blood there could be no remission of sins for us? The constant sacrificing of so many inoffensive animals pointed to the one great sacrifice which Jesus was to offer up without spot to God. Considered in this light, every institution of this kind had its significancy. We are therefore taught, in the New Testament, to understand them as shadows of

good things to come, of which the body is Christ. The darkness of types vanished in his cross, when he appeared once in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Many of the most remarkable events, and many of the most distinguished personages mentioned in the Old Testament, were typical of the cross of Christ. We cannot be mistaken in this interpretation of them, since the inspired writers of the New Testament teach us so to understand them. The priesthood of Melchisedec, and that of Aaron and his sons, prefigured the everlasting priesthood of the Son of God. The astonishing transaction of Isaac's being bound and laid on the altar by the hands of his father, is explained by the cross of Christ. It pleased the Lord to bruise him: he hath put him to grief: he made his soul an offering for sin.

The lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness, for the healing of the expiring Israelites, was realized in the elevation of Jesus on the cross. So was the Son of man lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Bread from heaven sustained the lives of the travellers from Egypt to Canaan: Jesus came down from heaven, and gave himself to be the life of the world. The rock was smitten, to give drink to the thirsty tribes of the Lord: that rock was Christ, smitten for us by the rod of justice, that we might be furnished from him with the waters of life and salvation. Joshua led the people of Israel into Canaan: Jesus brings us into the promised land of rest and felicity.

The prophets of God, *rapt into future times,* foretold the transactions of the Redeemer's life, the sorrows of his soul, the agonies of his death, and the glorious effects which

were to ensue. In the early ages of the world, the faith of God's people was supported by the mysterious prediction, that the "Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." The patriarchs were assured that in the promised Seed all nations of the world should be blessed. Job knew that his Redeemer lived. Jacob, in a divine ecstasy, before his death, delivered that wonderful oracle, that the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh, the Prince of Peace, should make his appearance; to whom the gathering of the people should be. To the beloved Daniel the time was revealed more expressly, when Messiah should be cut off, to finish transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy.

The circumstances attending the crucifixion of Jesus are foretold by the Psalmist, as if he had actually seen them. The agonies he should feel, are described; the cry he should utter on the cross, is expressed; the casting of lots for his garments, the piercing of his hands and his feet, and the vinegar and the gall given him to drink, are distinctly mentioned. Psalm 22.

Sometimes the prophets represent Jesus as a sufferer, and sometimes as a conqueror. Now they speak of his humiliation, then of his exaltation. They point him out as the Star that was to come out of Jacob, and as the Branch that was to spring out of the stem of Jesse. They describe him as the Angel of the covenant; and as the Desire of all nations, who should suddenly come into his temple. They hold him forth as a King who should reign in righteousness, extending his sway from shore to shore; whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and of whose

dominion there shall be no end. "To us," they cry, in a divine transport, "to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Yet, mysterious as it is, this is he of whom they speak, in other places, as calling himself "a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised by the people;" as being "hated without a cause;" as being "despised and rejected of men; led like a lamb to the slaughter; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and cut off out of the land of the living." The cross of Christ explains, elucidates, and confirms all these predictions.

2. The cross of Christ is the *sum of the Gospel*. What is the Gospel but a message from heaven, of mercy, of peace, and of salvation, through the sufferings and death of the Son of God? Of Gospel *history*, what is the sum? Christ crucified. What do the four evangelists relate? They all, for substance, tell the same story; and that story is rightly termed the Gospel. It is the history of the cross. In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word is established. God has graciously given us four, all inspired by his Holy Spirit, to relate the birth, the life, the labors, the preaching, the miracles, the sufferings, and the death of Jesus. They tell us what he said, what he did, and what he endured from the powers of darkness, from the hands of men, and from the sword of justice. They inform us how he was at last condemned, and nailed to the tree, for the testimony which he bore to the truth, that he was the only-begotten Son of God, and that the same divine honors were due to him as to the Father.

The *doctrine* of the Gospel is the doctrine of the cross.

"We preach Christ crucified." "I determined," says one of the first of his messengers, inspired to bear his name before Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel, "I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." The death of Christ, for our sins, is the life of the Gospel. All the lines of evangelical truth meet in this one point. You cannot mention one individual branch of the sacred system which stands unconnected with it. Our being chosen to eternal life, our regeneration, our calling, our justification, our adoption into the family of God, our sanctification, our perseverance in faith and holiness to eternal felicity—all have an immediate relation to the atonement of Christ. Take that foundation away, and the whole superstructure falls to the ground.

3. The cross of Christ is the *salvation of sinners.* The Gospel is a system which glorifies God by doing good to men; a system, in its aspect benign, and in its agency infinitely beneficial. It is not like a meteor, to dazzle us with a vain glitter; not like a comet, to terrify us with a formidable blaze, without affording us any solid advantage. It is richly stored with benefits of the most important and the most exalted kind; like the glorious sun in the heavens, diffusing beams of light, and life, and ineffable joy, all around. By it all that believe are eventually brought to enjoy a much nobler and more exalted state of existence than that from which Adam fell, and which they lost in him.

The grand object held forth in the Gospel, is the salvation of man. The distinguishing character of him who effects this great work is that of a Saviour, an almighty Saviour, who came to deliver us from the wrath to come, to recover us from the abyss of sin and misery into which we are fallen, and to exalt us to the regions of endless feli-

city. This he effected, not barely by the heavenly doctrine which he taught, and the bright example which he set before us, but by the death which he died for our sins.

Mankind are represented in the Scriptures of truth as being in a lost and ruined condition. But Jesus came to save the lost, by bearing their sins in his own body on the tree; by being wounded for their transgressions, and bruised for their iniquities; by suffering, the just for the unjust, that they might have healing by his stripes, and life by his death.

This enables us to account for all that is said in the Scripture concerning the dignity of the Redeemer's person. He was found in fashion as a man, but he thought it no robbery—thought it no more than what he might justly claim—to be equal with God. Though he was really and truly man, that he might be capable of suffering, and of dying, yet all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in him. He and the Father are one in nature and perfections. If the Redeemer's death were not a proper atonement for sin, why was it necessary that God should be manifested in the flesh? Why was it necessary that he who redeems us should be Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature? An angel from heaven might have taught us the will of our Maker, and given us a good example. Nay, a man like ourselves might have done both. The deity of Christ, and his atonement for sin, must stand or fall together. It is the dignity of the Redeemer's person that gives efficacy and validity to his sacrifice.

Misery is the natural consequence of guilt. Death is the wages of sin; its proper and just reward. What, then, is it that saves us from impending ruin? No effort, no expedient of our own; but the remedy which God himself

has provided. What is it that delivers us from going down to destruction, but the ransom found? Our blessed Lord told Nicodemus that the end of his being lifted up upon the cross was this, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish. Is it not, then, the cross of Christ that saves us from destruction? Is it not a crucified Jesus who saves us from eternal misery? Who that seriously thinks of this can forbear to admire the wonderful expedient?

The cross of Christ reconciles us to God. It procures our peace with him. It appeases the wrath of our incensed Judge, as it is a full satisfaction for our crimes. Through this ample compensation, awful justice smiles, as well-pleased with every one who believes in Jesus. He is emphatically styled "our peace," having made peace by the blood of his cross. This is the import of that divine declaration, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Through his cross we enjoy the favor of God, which is better than life. His love is manifested to us through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The cross of Christ procures our spiritual life. We are raised from a death in trespasses and sins, in consequence of the Redeemer's death for us. The end of his dying for us, we are assured, was, that we might live unto God; that divine life might be imparted to us from the living Head. To this purport is his own testimony: "I am come that they might have life." Thus a sweet singer in our Israel expresses the delightful truth:

> "Her noblest life my spirit draws
> From his dear wounds and bleeding side."

In consequence of his dying for us, the life-giving Spirit is bestowed, to impart to us heavenly knowledge, evangeli-

cal repentance, living faith, holy love, and spiritual joy. Whatever we are as Christians, we are that of God in Christ Jesus, and as the fruit of his death. He is made of God unto us, not only wisdom and righteousness, but sanctification. If we are quickened, it is together with Christ; if we are healed, it is by his stripes.

The cross of Christ procures our pardon and justification. There is no remission of sins but through the shedding of his blood. We are chargeable with crimes, almost without number, from the least of which nothing can free us but the cross of Christ. This removes our transgressions from us, as far as the east is from the west. The blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin. Whosoever believeth in him shall receive the blessing of a free and full remission. Sin shall never rise up in judgment against him; it is done away, as though it had never been; nay, we are assured it shall not even be remembered any more for ever.

The curse of that holy law which we had broken, is removed from us by the cross of Christ. If we have faith in the Son of God, the law proclaims no words of terror against us: its awful penalty has been borne, its tremendous malediction has been endured by him who espoused our cause and undertook our recovery. What else can be the meaning of that most delightful declaration, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us?" There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; they are justified freely by his blood; so justified, that nothing is laid to their charge; so justified, as to stand complete in Christ; so justified, as to be beheld without spot by the eyes of infinite purity. The righteousness of Jesus covers them; hides their nakedness, and all their deformity; and renders

them righteous, even as he is righteous. Glorious privilege! What tongue can express, what heart conceive its value!

The cross of Christ opens the gates of paradise for our reception. As there is no escaping eternal destruction, so there is no enjoying the felicity of the heavenly state, but through the Saviour's cross. Contemplate, dear brethren, the bliss of the celestial inheritance; think how great, how permanent, how satisfying it will be; and remember that it is the gift of God to you, through Jesus Christ. If Israel is saved with an everlasting salvation, he is saved in the Lord. The saints who are now in glory, overcame by the blood of the Lamb; they washed their robes and made them white in that cleansing fountain; therefore are they before the throne of God. Hence, they say, with one voice, "Worthy art thou to receive riches, and honor, and glory, and power; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

But the blessings which hang clustering on the Saviour's cross are so great, that they can never be told. Whatever is included in our salvation, comes to us in this way. And therefore we add,

4. The cross of Christ is the *conquest of our enemies.* Captivity itself is led captive. The powers of darkness are overcome. Jesus has spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them on the cross. They may yet be permitted to distress us for a while, but the God of peace shall bruise Satan and all his legions under our feet shortly.

Our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed. The decree has gone forth, which shall never be reversed: "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." After the apostle Paul had been uttering that pathetic exclama-

tion, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" he immediately adds, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!" A glorious prospect of complete victory opened to his view, which turned his mourning into joy.

The cross of Christ delivers us from this present wicked world, with all its snares and vexations. The divine Redeemer died to accomplish this among all his other achievements. In this view, the cross of Christ was endeared to the blessed apostle Paul, as that by which the world was crucified to him, and he unto the world.

Death, the last foe of man, and the gloomy grave, the terror of all living, are overcome by the cross of Christ. Death's formidable appearance remains, but his sting is gone; for when guilt was expiated, death was disarmed. The pardoned sinner, therefore, may boldly say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!" The king of terrors is, by the cross of Christ, converted into a messenger of peace. Now it is gain to die. The grave is become a quiet resting-place for our mouldering bones, till the great rising-day.

5. The cross of Christ is the *foundation of our hope.* Some speak of a hope built on the review of a well-spent life—a certain indication of a want of self-knowledge. What hope can the enlightened, the anxious, trembling sinner have on this ground? A thousand miscarriages arise to his view. Were there no ground of hope but that of the deeds of the law, such a one must sink into despair. Nothing can be a sure ground of hope, but that which removes sin, that which takes away the curse, that which satisfies justice, that which procures peace with God, and constitutes

a sure title to heaven. The cross of Christ, we have seen, answers all these purposes; answers them effectually. And hence it becomes the one, the only foundation of hope. The hope which is built upon it is sure and steadfast, like an anchor of the soul. Jesus Christ is the believing sinner's hope. Other foundation, for this salutary purpose, can no man lay. The disquieted conscience finds no relief but in the Saviour's complete atonement. The enlightened mind can derive no supporting confidence but from this source. "We believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved."

6. The cross of Christ is the *ground of our triumph.* How should it be otherwise? It answers every salutary purpose. It removes every evil, and insures every good. The Christian has not only hope towards God, but joy and consolation; joy which arises, at times, to a holy triumph. But on what is it founded? The apostle furnishes us with an answer: "We joy in God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom we have now received the atonement." He exemplifies this in his own happy experience. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." As if he had said, "This to me is the ground of the sublimest consolation, of the highest triumph, even of glorying. The atoning sacrifice of a crucified Saviour is all my boast. It is not only my constant support: it fills me with ineffable joy."

7. The cross of Christ gives us the *brightest display of the divine perfections.* It not only brings the most solid comforts to man, but the highest glory to God. We see, on this ground, that a just and holy God, though determined to display his mercy and unbounded grace, would do it only in such a way as might eternally vindicate the honor

of his law; might demonstrate the purity of his nature, and declare the inviolable faithfulness of his threatening word.

We conceive that the Most High is infinitely wise. His wisdom shines in all his works. But nowhere have we so striking a display of it as in the cross of Christ. How wonderful was the contrivance which could harmonize, in the salvation of man, the seemingly opposite claims of mercy and of justice; that could satisfy, exalt, and magnify both; causing mercy and truth to meet together, righteousness and peace to embrace each other! Had punishment been inflicted on the sinner in all its severity, the glory of mercy had not been seen. And on the other hand, had the sinner been pardoned, without any penalties sustained by himself or his substitute, justice had been set aside, and, speaking after the manner of men, one essential attribute of Deity would have been arrayed against another.

A God all mercy, is a God unjust. But in the cross of Christ, mercy and justice are equally glorified. In this divine expedient, therefore, God hath displayed infinite wisdom; or, to use the language of inspiration, "He hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence."

The apostle Paul tells us, that God set forth the blessed Jesus for a propitiation, through faith in his blood, with this express design, that he might declare his righteousness; might demonstrate his justice, whose essential character and principal office is to punish sin. Thus a holy God shows himself to be strictly and inviolably righteous, in the administration of his government, even while he is the justifier of the sinner that believeth in Jesus. In this method of dispensing grace, he secures the utmost reverence to his divine law, he declares his infinite abhorrence of sin, he strikes the deepest terror on every persevering sinner, at

the same time that he lays a solid foundation for the highest hope in every penitent transgressor. The torments inflicted on condemned souls, in the infernal regions, are not so awful a monument of the justice and holiness of a sin-hating God, as he has given us in the crucifixion of his beloved Son. For, if the Lord spared him not, when iniquity was not found in him, but only laid upon him, how much less shall he spare the stubborn offender himself, who obstinately persists in his rebellion? Nothing sets forth the horrid aggravations of sin, its execrable vileness and loathsomeness in the sight of God—nothing speaks such terror to the workers of iniquity, did they but lay it to heart, as the shameful, the bitter, the accursed death of the Prince of Life, for our offences.

The love, the grace, and mercy of God, are most illustriously displayed in the cross of Christ. Pardon, life, and endless felicity, granted to condemned criminals on any terms, must be wonderful, and give an astonishing display of divine mercy; but when the Father grants these through the wounds, the agonies, the death of his dear, his only-begotten, his equal Son, he not only manifests his love, but *commends* it; he displays it in such a way as may justly inflame us with gratitude, and transport us with everlasting admiration. He shows it in its highest perfection. The blessings of salvation, invaluable in themselves, are unspeakably enhanced by the manner in which they are conferred. "God so loved the world," loved it in such a way, and to such a degree, as can only be expressed, only conceived by himself; he so loved it, "that he gave his only-begotten Son" to tortures and to death, even the death of the cross, "that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Sin hath reigned unto death: but

God's free and unbounded grace, like a glorious and superior sovereign, in all its fulness, riches, and splendor, reigns through the righteousness of Jesus to eternal life. A thousand worlds conferred on us, would have been as nothing in comparison with the grace which is displayed in the death of the Son of God for us. Herein is love indeed.

In a word, would we see the tremendous name of Jehovah written in the fairest lines; would we see all his adorable perfections shine forth with the greatest splendor; we must fix our attention on the Redeemer's cross.

Finally: The cross of Christ is the *grand incentive to holiness.* The doctrine of complete salvation by the Redeemer's death, is far from being unfriendly to the interests of morality. That morality which is recommended in the sacred Scriptures, is engrafted on evangelical principles, and produced by the constraining love of a dying Redeemer. If we wish you to be animated to the practice of every good work, we are persuaded that the love of Christ, in his dying for you, will be the most powerful incitement. A lively sense of this will produce the gratitude of heart, which will be more operative than the most cogent philosophical reasonings to stir you up to activity in the way of holiness, or the most awful threatenings to deter you from the contrary.

We do not mean, that exhortations to duty are superseded by the doctrine for which we plead; or that it is unnecessary to instruct, to caution, to warn, and admonish the followers of Christ with respect to their conduct: what we mean is, that the love and grace of the Redeemer, manifested in his dying for us, are the most powerful inducements to practical holiness. "The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teacheth us, that, denying ungodliness

and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Would we be excited to unfeigned and active love to the Author of our salvation? We love him because he first loved us. Would we be excited to ingenuous sorrow for sin? While we look to him whom we have pierced, we mourn after a godly sort. Nothing is so likely to break the stony heart, and to melt the ice within us to evangelical repentance, as a view of a suffering Saviour, wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. Would we be induced to a thorough renunciation of every false way? No motive is so effectual to divorce our affections from the abominations to which we have formerly cleaved, and turn our feet from every evil way, as the powerful persuasion that Christ died for us, that we, being dead unto sin, should live unto righteousness. Would we be induced to practise all that is comprehended in the duties of benevolence, kindness, charity, and brotherly love? No persuasive is so endearing as the kindness and love of God our Saviour: "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us." When we are exhorted to relative duties, it is in the same style. "As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it." When we are urged to an entire devotedness to God, we are told that "we are not our own, but bought with a price," and therefore should "glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his;" that we should "live not to ourselves, but to him that died for us, and rose again."

"Talk they of morals? O thou Bleeding Love,
Thou maker of new morals to mankind,
The grand morality is love of thee!

Here strongest motives sting,
Here sacred violence assaults his soul,
And nothing but compulsion is forborne."

The cross of Christ is, then, the spring of true holiness; the incentive to every virtue. Jesus died, to redeem us from all iniquity, to purify us to himself, and make us zealous of good works. What are naked instructions, what are abstract reasonings, in comparison with the astonishing love of our dying Lord? It invites us, it urges us, it constrains us to all holiness, that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. May his love be ever warmly impressed on our hearts. May we live by that faith in the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us, which is an ever active principle of cheerful and grateful obedience.

It becomes me now to reflect on what I have read.

Christ is become a sacrifice to divine justice, in the room and stead of men. And he is also our great High Priest; for he offered himself up to the strokes of justice and the penal demands of the law of God, and thereby he hath shown himself to be a priest of reconciliation. How adorable is this contrivance! How amazing is this love! How should sinners be surprised with a sense of this abounding grace! Here I behold the Son of God stooping from the height of his glory, to become a mortal man, surrounded with flesh and sorrows. I behold the first Favorite of Heaven, the only-beloved Son, leaving the bosom of his Father, and the fulness of celestial joys, that he might unite himself to our feeble nature, and taste the anguish and the smart that our rebellions had deserved. I behold him forsaken of his Father, and lying under the weight and terrors of some unknown discoveries and impressions of that divine

indignation that was due to sinners; unknown impression indeed, that struck the Son of God with amazement, and made his soul exceeding sorrowful, even to death.

And was all this for my sins, O my Saviour! Didst thou sustain these heavy sufferings from the hand of God that such a rebel as I might be reconciled? Yes, all this for my sins, if I am found a sincere believer on the Son of God.

Inquire now, O my soul, dost thou believe in Christ? Hast thou seen thy heavy guilt, and thy danger of eternal death? Hast thou been weary and heavy laden with a sense of thy past iniquities? Hast thou been pained at heart under the present power of indwelling sin? And hast thou fled for refuge to the hope set before thee in the Gospel? Hast thou joyfully received Jesus the Saviour by faith in his blood, by a living and active faith? Hast thou committed thyself to him, to be delivered from the reign of sin, as well as from the condemnation of it? Then mayest thou join with the blessed apostle, and speak in the language of faith, *He loved me, and gave himself for me.* Gal. 2 : 20.

Let me meditate again on the sorrows and agonies of my dear, my adored Redeemer; infinite agonies and sorrows, beyond all the powers of language. Is my heart made of stone, that it can hear such a history, and not melt within me? Have I no tender part within me, to bleed at the rehearsal of such anguish and such love? Blessed Jesus, smite the rock of my heart, and let it pour out new streams of repentance and affectionate gratitude. I was dead, and the Son of God gave himself up to death, in order to raise me to life again. I was a traitor and an enemy, and he hath sustained the arrows of the Almighty, to reconcile me to his Father, and turn away his infinite wrath and

indignation. My great High Priest has offered up himself a bloody sacrifice for me, that my guilt might be forgiven and cancelled for ever.

Think, O my soul, study, contrive, speak, what wilt thou render to the Lord for such astonishing condescension and unexampled grace? How wilt thou show thy inestimable value of his atonement? What does he require of thee, but to keep those garments clean which he has washed in so rich a fountain as his own blood! And shall I ever wilfully indulge the practice of sin again, and return to my old defilements? Shall I ever consent to break the law of my God? Have I not seen the dreadful nature and dismal effects of it, in the agonies and death of my dearest Lord? What shall I do, that I may never sin more? Lord, I cannot preserve myself from the fatal infection, while I dwell in a world where sin reigns all around me; in a world that lies in wickedness; and while I am so nearly allied to flesh and blood, where folly, and vice, and sin, run through every vein to my heart. Jesus, I commit myself afresh to thy care; thou wilt save the soul that thou hast purchased at so dear a rate; thou wilt accept and save a returning penitent. Here, I devote my life, myself, my flesh and spirit, and all my powers, to thy obedience and the purposes of thy glory, for ever and ever. My soul looks up to thee with an eye of humble confidence, and my faith and hope rest on thy everlasting love. Amen.

No. 174.

QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT.

"My children," said the old man, "the words of your dying father will be few. I wish them to sink deep into your hearts." Then raising himself a little in his bed, with a degree of strength which he had not been able to command for several of the last weeks of his sickness, he proceeded:

"When young, I enjoyed religious privileges, and was the subject of occasional serious reflection. When just entering my sixteenth year, religious impressions were made on my mind with unusual force. I seemed to hear a voice continually saying to me, *Seek religion now.* I was unhappy: my former amusements lost their relish. Still I was not willing wholly to relinquish them, and obey the voice which urged me to seek religion immediately. One day, after much reflection, I deliberately promised to God, that, as soon as the season of youthful amusement was past, I would give myself to religious pursuits. My anxieties immediately left me; I returned to my amusement, and the whole subject was soon forgotten.

"When at twenty-five, the monitory voice returned, reminded me of my promise, and again pressed upon me the importance of eternal things. Though I had not thought of my promise for years, I acknowledged its obligations, but an immediate fulfilment seemed more impracticable than it did nine years before. I vowed with increased solemnity, that, when the cares of a rising family should subside, I would certainly attend to the concerns of religion.

"Again I applied myself to worldly avocations, and soon buried all thoughts of the admonition I had received. At fifty, when you, my children, were diminishing instead of increasing my cares, this heavenly monitor returned. 'Fulfil your promise, *seek religion now,*' was continually pressing upon my mind. I knew that I had made such a promise, but I felt dissatisfied that its fulfilment should be claimed so soon. I regretted that I had not attended to the subject before, when I could have done it with less difficulty; but such was the extent and pressure of my

business, that to do it then seemed impossible. The subject made me unhappy, and, after much deliberation, I sought relief to my troubled feelings by most solemnly renewing my promise to God. I said, When the pressure of my business is past, I will devote my whole attention to a preparation for eternity.

"No sooner had I fixed my mind on this course, than my anxieties left me—the strivings of the Spirit ceased in my bosom, and ceased for ever! When sickness warned me of approaching death, I sought to fix my feelings on this subject, but it was in vain. There was a gloom and terror drawn around religion, at which my soul shuddered. I felt that I was forsaken of God, but it did not move me I had no love to God, no repentance for sin, nor wish to forsake it. I felt nothing but the sullen gloom of despair. I knew I was in the hands of a justly offended God, from whom I expected no mercy, and could ask none. With these feelings I am now about to enter the eternal world. To you, my children, I can only say, Profit by my example: quench not the Spirit—seek religion now, if you would avoid a miserable eternity—put not off the concerns of your soul till"——. The sentence died upon his lips; his strength, which had been all summoned to make this last effort, suddenly failed; he fell back upon his bed, and with a groan that seemed to speak the pains of another world, the immortal spirit took its flight from that body which it had inhabited nearly fourscore years, to receive according to that it had done.

This little narrative I had from a grandson of the old man, who stood by his dying bed. He was a minister of the Gospel, and dated his first permanent conviction of his sin, and exposure to eternal ruin, from the solemnities of that awful scene. The descendants of the old man were numerous, many of whom became hopefully pious; several were first awakened by his dying charge.

Three years before his death, there was a revival of religion in the place where he resided, and the son with whom he lived was a subject of its influence. He made the most violent opposition to his son's religious feelings, and never, whilst able to move about the house, did he remain in the room during family prayers; nor, till his dying hour, was a prayer offered in his hearing, at his request.

Some important reflections are suggested by the history of this unhappy man.

1. Youth is the best time to seek the Lord. This is evident from *reason*. Every year that we spend in sinful habits, increases their power over our souls, builds higher the walls of separation between us and heaven, and renders it less probable that we shall ever enter the gates of the New Jerusalem.

This is evident from the *Holy Scriptures*. There are particular commands and promises to the young: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." "They that seek me early, shall find me."

It is also evident from *observation*. The writer of this has frequently been permitted to witness the effusions of God's Spirit in revivals of religion; and the uniform result of his observation is, that a majority of those who are the subjects of renewing grace are youth. Nor is it barely a majority. A minister who had long been a successful laborer in the vineyard of the Lord, remarked to the writer a few years since, that within his observation, not more than *one in seven* of those who gave evidence of being born again were past the period of youth. Youth, then, is the best time to seek the Lord.

2. There is such a thing as quenching the Spirit of God. Yes, reader, there is such a thing as being given over to hardness of heart, and left only to fill up the measure of our iniquities.

I attempt not to say *how far* one may go in resisting the influences of the Spirit, and yet be saved. I only say, there is a point beyond which, if you go, no voice of mercy, no strivings of the Holy Spirit, shall ever follow you: a line, which if you pass, there remaineth no more sacrifice for your sins, no hope of heaven for you.

And suffer me, dear reader, if yet in your sins, to suggest, that this line may be nearer than you suppose. There is, perhaps, never an extensive revival of religion, in which there are not individuals who give awful reason to fear that they have passed it; individuals who, after being for a time deeply anxious, resist the Holy Ghost, and settle down in a tenfold stupidity. Few, perhaps, become so fully con-

vinced, this side the eternal world, that they have destroyed their souls, as did the aged man I have mentioned; yet He only, who searcheth the heart, knoweth how many there are, in this land of gospel light, who so far resist the strivings of the Spirit, that God says of them, "They shall call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me, but they shall not find me."

Could you have seen the man on whom the storms of fourscore winters had beaten, convulsed with despair whilst the stern messenger of death was forcing away the reluctant spirit to meet its righteous doom, you would have felt that there is awful weight in the divine declaration, "Woe also to them when I depart from them."

Dear youth, whose eyes may glance over this brief narrative, did you ever feel any anxiety about eternity? any of the strivings of God's Spirit? If you did, I pray you suffer a word of entreaty from one who desires your everlasting peace. *Quench not the Spirit.* Say not to the heavenly messenger, When I am old, I will hear; lest in old age you lie down in sorrow and despair; lest God should say of you, "He is joined to his idols, let him alone."

Should this little Tract meet the eye of any *aged* sinner, let me, I entreat you, aged friend, say a word for your soul before you venture upon the untried realities of eternity. You remember the days when you, too, enjoyed the influence of the Holy Spirit; when you were anxious about the way of life, and disposed to seek salvation. And are these gone? Standing upon the brink of eternity, with the frosts of time already on your head, are you unconcerned for your soul? Is this a time to sleep? The *best* time to seek the Lord is gone—gone for ever. The *only* time, if not yet gone, will tarry but a few days with you. This torpor which is creeping over your soul, if it be not already the palsy of spiritual death, is fast becoming so. Have you the great work of salvation yet to accomplish, with all your energies enfeebled, and your lamp of life burning more and more dimly? O! be about it. Seek the Lord *earnestly*, if yet he may be found, lest your gray hairs go down in despair to the grave, and the pains of the second death seize upon your soul.

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No. 175.

TO

MOTHERS.

"When they left me for the week-day school, I followed their infant footsteps with prayer."—PAGE 2.

IN the vicinity of P—— there was a pious mother, who had the happiness of seeing her children, in very early life, brought to the knowledge of the truth, walking in the fear of the Lord, and ornaments in the Christian Church. A clergyman, who was travelling, heard this circumstance respecting this mother, and wished very much to see her, thinking that there might be *something* peculiar in her mode of giving religious instruction, which rendered it so effectual. He accordingly visited her, and inquired respecting the manner in which she discharged the duties of a mother, in educating her children.

The woman replied, that she did not know as she had been more faithful than any Christian mother would be, in the religious instruction of her children. After a little conversation, however, she said,

"While my children were infants on my lap, as I washed them, I raised my heart to God, that he would wash them in that blood which cleanseth from sin. As I clothed them in the morning, I asked my heavenly Father to clothe them with the robe of Christ's righteousness. As I provided them food, I prayed that God would feed their souls with the bread of heaven, and give them to drink the water of life. When I have prepared them for the house of God, I have plead that their bodies might be fit temples for the Holy Ghost to dwell in. When they left me for the week-day school, I followed their infant footsteps with a prayer, that their path through life might be like that of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. And as I committed them to the rest of the night, the silent breathing of my soul has been, that their heavenly Father would take them to his embrace, and fold them in his paternal arms."

Here is the influence of the *silent, unseen* exertions of a mother: an influence which will be felt, when those external accomplishments, and fleeting enjoyments, which many labor to give their children, shall be forgotten, or remembered only as the means of facilitating a rapid descent to the world of sorrow. In this little story, two things strike our attention: these efforts were made *early*, and with a *reliance on the divine blessing*. This mother *felt* that she received her children from God, and was accountable to him for the manner in which she trained them up. She knew that her labors would be vain, unless God should in mercy grant her the aid of his Spirit to sanctify and save the soul; therefore, through *all* the duties of the day, and all the interesting periods of childhood, she looked up to a God who is ever near to those who will call upon him, and who will listen to their cries. How happy must be that household whose God is the Lord; what heavenly joy beams

from every countenance, and with what glorious hopes do they look beyond the grave to that mansion provided for them in their Father's house; and thrice happy must be that *mother*, who, in the fear of God, and in reference to eternity, has thus performed her duty.

There are feelings in a *mother's* bosom, which are known only by a mother: the tie which binds her to her children, is one compared with which all other ties are feeble. It is to these feelings that the fact just stated will speak a language which must be understood; and it must strike a note on this chord that will vibrate through every fibre of the soul. While appeals are often made to him who has lived long in sin, that fall like the sound of the empty wind upon his ear; and the voice of warning thunders in its truths to hearts of adamant; the appeal now made, is to an ear which is not deaf, to a heart which can feel.

The noise and tumult of the active world often drown the "still small voice" of the Gospel, which sounds in the ears of the man of business; and worldly wisdom and strict calculation sometimes lead men to neglect the question, "What will it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his soul?" But this Tract is designed for a different situation in life; for those who do not mingle in the bustle and hurry of the world, who are retired to a more quiet, though not to an unimportant sphere. In some hour of silent meditation this may fall into the hands of a *mother;* and the duties it recommends can be performed even while engaged in the common business of the family.

It is no fiction of poetry that,

"Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined."

When the mind begins to open, and the attention is first arrested by the objects that surround us, much depends upon her, who, in that tender period, shall make the *first* impressions upon that mind, and first direct its attention.

It is *then* that the mother has an access and an influence which cannot be attained at any other period. The first

inquiries of the infant must be answered by her who gave it birth. As he gazes upon those twinkling stars that glitter in the evening sky, and asks, "Who made those shining things?" it is a mother's duty to tell the little prattler of that great and good Being who dwells in the heavens, and who is the Father of all our mercies.

And as the mind enlarges, the mother tells the little listener of that Jesus who lay in a manger, and died on the cross. And when she softens its pillow for its nightly slumbers, and watches its closing eyes, it is her privilege to hear it lisp, "*Our Father,*" and direct it to love that Father whose name it so early speaks. Let this golden opportunity pass, these days of childhood roll away, and the mind be filled only with fabled stories, or sportive songs, and the precious immortal is trained for some other state than the paradise above.

Do you say that you are *ignorant,* and are not capable of giving instruction? As your child clings to your bosom and directs his inquiring countenance to you for some interesting story, you know enough to tell him of some hero or king; and can you not tell him of the King of Zion, the Prince of Peace? And what more could the learned philosopher tell this infant mind?

You are *unknown* and *obscure,* did you say? But you are known to your child, and your influence with your child is greater than that of a legislator or general. "Say not, I, who am obscure, may act without restraint, especially when secluded from the world, in the retirement of my family. *Obscure!* You are *immortal.* You must go to the *judgment;* and every whisper of your life will be exhibited before an assembled universe! *Secluded!* What if the eye of the world does not follow you into the domestic circle? Is it not restraint enough that your *child* is there? That child has a *soul,* worth more than a million globes of gold. That child, too, may become a legislator, or a judge, or a pastor in a church. Take care, you who are a mother! You act under a dreadful responsibility. You cannot *stir* without touching some string that will

vibrate after your head is laid in the dust. One word of pious counsel, or one word of sinful levity or passion, uttered in the hearing of your child, may produce an effect on your children's children. Nay, its influence may be felt on the other side of the globe, and may extend into eternity." Your words are received with confidence, and "*My mother told me so,*" is an argument of sufficient weight to convince the child of the most important truths.

Here you have an influence which no other creature can have, and can exert it in circumstances the most favorable. It is not to open to a son the stores of science, that may qualify him to rank among the learned and the wise of the world; it is not to adorn a daughter with those accomplishments which shall attract the attention of those who crowd the hall of pleasure, or move in the circle of refinement and fashion.

But the object is far more *noble,* more worthy the undivided attention of those who live for immortality. That child who now prattles on your knee, or sports around your dwelling, may yet tell some perishing heathen of Jesus of Nazareth; may yet be an able soldier in the army of Immanuel, and may plant the standard of the cross on the shores of Greenland, or under the burning sun of Africa. *Look at facts.* What first led the pious and eminently useful John Newton to the knowledge of the truth? The instructions of his mother, given at the early period of *four years,* fastened upon his conscience, and led him to a Saviour.

Can you estimate the effect of his labors? Not till you can compute the usefulness of Buchanan and Scott, who were converted by his instrumentality—till you can see the full blaze of that light which the former carried into the heart of heathen India; and witness the domestic comfort and brightening hopes occasioned by the labors of the latter. Who taught young Timothy, an early laborer in the vineyard of Jesus Christ, the first lessons of religious truth? Who led Samuel, a prophet and a judge in Israel, while he was yet *young,* to the house of the Lord, and ded-

icated him to the service of the God of heaven? *A praying mother.*

Though the seed thus sown in childhood may not spring up and bring forth fruit while under the maternal eye, yet we must not conclude that it is lost. A clergyman recently met a seaman in the street of a neighboring city, and pressed upon him the duty of attending to the concerns of his soul. The hardy mariner burst into tears, and exclaimed, "*Stop, stop,* don't talk to me so; it is just as my mother talked to me when I was a boy." A mother's counsel had followed him through all his wanderings, and still the words of her who prayed for him retained their hold on his conscience. The time has come when it is esteemed a greater honor to be the mother of a Brainerd or a Martyn, than of a Cæsar or Napoleon. And suppose the mothers of these men, whose characters, though so widely different, are so universally known, should, from their unchanging state, look upon those sons whom they have nourished; what would be the view presented to them? Who would not choose to have given birth to the Christian heroes? It is not for this short state of existence only that you are to train your children. The little group that now cluster around you are destined for immortality. When the world on which they stand shall have passed away, and its pleasures and its honors shall be forgotten, then they whom you have introduced to this state of being will but begin to live. Their characters are now forming for *eternity,* and you are aiding to form them.

Though you may not design it, though you may quiet yourself, that if you can do them no good, you will not do them injury; yet you exert an influence which *is* felt, and will be felt when your head is laid in the dust. Let, then, this appeal to a mother's feelings be heard, let it come to your own bosom, and ponder it in your heart.

Do you know the way to a throne of mercy; and can you kneel before it, and forget the children of your love? Can you watch their closing eyes, and not commit them to your God? Can you labor that they may enjoy the good

things of this fleeting world, and not *pray* that God would prepare them for that upon which they will soon enter? You see them growing up around you without hope and without God in the world: though you may be unable to do more, can you refuse to *pray*, that he who in a peculiar manner extends the arms of mercy to those in the morning of life, would take them to his embrace, and prepare them for his kingdom?

You have seen the hand of disease fasten upon them, and have passed days of anxious toil and nights of sleepless solicitude to arrest their malady; and have cried from a bursting heart, "Oh, spare my child!" You have seen the object of your tenderest affection sinking in the arms of death, and with a heart rent with anguish have said with the nobleman, "Come down, ere my child die." And when the last duties of parental affection were performed, and the grave had closed over the child of your bosom, you have perhaps looked back to the time when it was under your care, and mourned that you thought no more of its immortal part, that you prayed no more for its precious soul.

If you have passed through scenes like these, if you have thus felt, then remember those now in life and health, and improve the opportunity now given you.

The time for your exertion is very *short*. Soon your children will arrive at that period of life when a mother's influence will be very feebly felt, unless it has been *early* exerted. Would you find in them a rich source of consolation when your head shall become white with years, and your body be bending to the grave; then you will *now* commit them to him who can sanctify and save the soul. Should you go down to the grave and leave these objects of your love in a cold, unfeeling world, what better can you do for them than to secure the friendship of One who sticketh closer than a brother, and whose love is stronger than death?

The tender tie which now binds you to them will soon be dissolved; you cannot resist the stroke which shall tear them from your bosom. You may have felt the pang—

your heart may have been filled with sorrow. O then, if you ever pray, if your soul ever went out to *your* Father and *your* God, in humble petitions, tell him of your children who know him not: when you know what it is to wrestle in secret with the God of Jacob, give him back in faith your *children*. Then you may hope, through grace, to say, in that other world to which you are going, "Lord, here am I, and the children thou hast given me."

Should this paper fall into the hands of a mother who never *prayed* even for herself, she *must*, she *cannot but* pray for those to whom she has given life. *Prayerless mother! spare*, O *spare* your child; stop where you now are, on the threshold of eternity, and remember, as you gaze on that countenance which smiles in your bosom, that you have *never prayed* for its soul, which will live for ever. Have you a mother's feelings, and can you still neglect it?

Oh, give me poverty, give me pain; leave me friendless and forsaken by the world; but leave me not to the embrace of a *prayerless mother*—leave not my soul to the care of one who never raised her weeping eyes to heaven, to implore its blessings on my head.

Are you a *mother*, and can you close your eyes upon the scenes of earth, and remember that you never raised, even in your silent breathings, the desires of your heart to heaven for a child, perhaps your only darling?

In some lonely hour, when the labors of the day are ended, and you have performed the last act of kindness for your sleeping babes, kneel, if you never have before, kneel before Him who seeth your heart in that silent hour, and utter one short prayer, one broken petition of penitence, faith, and love to the Saviour of sinners, for your dear children.

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THE

WELL-CONDUCTED FARM.

Mr. B——, a respectable farmer in Massachusetts, came, a number of years ago, into the possession of a farm of about six hundred acres. On this farm he employed eight or ten men. These men were in the habit, and had been for years, of taking each a portion of ardent spirit, when they labored, every day. They had grown up in the practice of taking it, and the idea was fixed in their minds that they *could* not do without. It was the common opinion in the place, that, for laboring men, who had to work hard, some ardent spirit was *necessary*. Mr. B—— for a time followed the common practice, and furnished his men with a portion of spirit *daily*. But, after much attentive observation, and mature reflection, he became deeply impressed with the conviction that the practice was not only useless, but hurtful. He became convinced that it tends

to lead men to intemperance; to undermine their constitutions; and to sow the seeds of death, temporal and eternal. And he felt that he could not be justified in continuing to cultivate his farm by means of a practice which was ruining the bodies and souls of his fellow-men. He therefore called his men together, and told them, in a kind and faithful manner, what were his convictions. He told them that he was perfectly satisfied that the practice of taking ardent spirits was not only needless, but hurtful—that it tended to weaken and destroy both the body and mind; and that he could not, consistently with his duty, be instrumental in continuing a practice which he had no doubt tended to destroy them both for this world and the world to come. He therefore, from that time, should furnish them with no ardent spirits.

One of them said that he could not work without it; and if he did not furnish them with it, he would not stay with him. "Very well," said Mr. B——; "hand me your bill, and be off." The man replied, that he presumed all the others would leave him. "Very well," said Mr. B——; "tell them, any of them who choose to leave—all of them, if they choose to go—to hand in their bills, and they shall have their money to-night. If they stay, however, they shall have nourishing food and drink, at any time, and in any abundance which they wish; and at the close of the year each one shall have twelve dollars, that is, one dollar a month, in addition to his wages. But I shall furnish no spirits of any kind, neither shall I have it taken by men in my employment. I had rather my farm would grow up to weeds, than be cultivated by means of so pernicious a practice as that of taking ardent spirits." However, none of the men left, except that one. And when he saw that all the others concluded to stay, he came back, and said, that as the others had concluded to stay, and do without rum, he believed that he could, and he should be glad to stay, too, if Mr. B—— had no objection. But he told him, No, he did not wish him to stay; he would make of him an

example, and he must go. So he departed. The rest went to work, and he furnished them with no spirits from that time through the season. Yet his work, he said, was done "with less trouble, in a better manner, and in better season, than ever before." Some of his men, however, he found, when they went abroad, did take ardent spirits. They sometimes procured it at the tavern, or a store; and in some instances took it secretly, while on his farm. The evil, therefore, although greatly lessened, was not entirely done away.

When he came to hire men again, he let it be known that he did not wish to hire any man who was not willing to abstain entirely, and at all times, from the use of ardent spirits. His neighbors told him that he could not hire men on those conditions; that men could not be found who would do without rum, especially in haying and harvesting. Well, he said, then he would not hire them at all. His farm should grow up to weeds. As to cultivating it by the help of rum, he would not. By allowing men in his employment, and for whose conduct he was in a measure responsible, to take ardent spirits, he should be lending his influence to continue a practice, or he should at least be conniving at a practice, which was "destroying more lives, making more mothers widows, and children orphans, than famine, pestilence, and sword: a practice which was destroying by thousands, and tens of thousands, not only the bodies, but the *souls* of men, rendering them, and their children after them, wretched for this world, and the world to come. "No," said he, "I will clear my hands of this enormous guilt. I will not by practice encourage, or by silence, or having men in my employment who take ardent spirits, connive at this deadly evil." However, he found no difficulty in hiring men, and of the best kind. And when his neighbors saw, that by giving one dollar a month more than others, he could hire as many men as he pleased, they gave up that objection. But they said, it was bad policy; for the men would not do so much work,

and he would, in the end, be a loser. But he told them that, although they might not at first do quite so much, he presumed that they would in the end do more. But if they should not, only let them do, said he, what they easily can, and I shall be satisfied. My Maker does not require of me any more than I can do without rum, (for he used no ardent spirits himself) and I shall require no more of them. His men went to work. And his business prospered exceedingly. His men were remarkably uniform in their temper and deportment; still, and peaceable.

He found them every day alike, and he could always safely trust them. What he expected to have done, he found *was* done, in good season, and in the best manner. His men never made so few mistakes, had so few disputes among themselves; they never injured and destroyed so few tools, found so little fault with their manner of living, or were, on the whole, so pleasant to one another, and to their employer. The men appeared, more than ever before, like brethren of the same family, satisfied with their business, contented, and happy.

At the close of the year, one of them came to Mr. B——, and, with tears in his eyes, said, "Sir, I thought that you were very hard, in keeping us from drinking rum. I had always been accustomed to it, and I thought that I could not do without it. And for the first three months," said he, "it was hard, very hard. I had such a *caving in* here"—putting his hands up to his side—"I had such a *desperate caving in* here, that I thought I should die. But, as you gave us good wages, and good pay, and the rest resolved to stand it without rum, I thought I would.

"And now," said he, "I am well and happy. I work with ease, sleep sweetly, and when I get up in the morning, instead of having, as I used to, my mouth and throat" —to use his own words—"so *full of cobwebs*, as to be *spitting cotton wool* all the time, my mouth and throat are clear as a whistle. I feel active, have a good appetite, and can eat any thing.

"Formerly, when I worked hard, I was at night tired, and could not sleep. When I got up in the morning I was so sore and stiff, so filled up in my throat, and my appetite was so gone, that I could do nothing till I had taken a glass of rum and molasses. I then stood it till breakfast. But my breakfast did not relish, and what I took did not seem to nourish me. Soon after I got to work I was *so hollow and so tired*, that I felt *desperate ugly* till 11 o'clock. Then I took a *new vamper*. And by the strength of that I got on till dinner. Then I must have a little more to give me an appetite. At three o'clock in the afternoon I must have recourse"—these were his words—"*to the hair of the same dog*, to keep up my sinking spirits. And thus I got along till night. Then I must have a little to sharpen appetite for supper. And after supper I could not sleep, till I had taken *another nightcap*.

"Thus I continued," said he, "year after year, undermining a constitution which was naturally very robust; and growing worse and worse, until I came under your wise and excellent regulations. And now," said he, "I am cured. I *am cured*. I can now do more labor than when I took spirits, without *half* the fatigue, and take nothing stronger than pure cold water. If a man would give me the same wages that you do, and a dollar a day in addition, to return to the practice of drinking rum, I would laugh at him." All this was the free, spontaneous effusion of his own mind, in view of the great change wrought in his feelings by leaving off *entirely* the use of ardent spirits.

Another of the workmen came to Mr. B—— and said, that he had found it very hard to do without rum at first; but he could now freely say, that he never enjoyed so good health, or felt so well, as he did then. He said that in cold weather in the winter, and after chopping all day in the woods, especially if exposed to rains, or if his feet were wet, he had for a long time been accustomed to a very bad rheumatism, and at night to a dreadful headache. He took spirits temperately, and he supposed it was necessary to

guard him against these evils. Still he suffered them; and he found nothing that would prevent them. But since he had left off entirely the use of spirits, he had had no rheumatism, and been entirely free from the headache.

Another of the workmen said he thought at first that he could do very well without spirits three quarters of the year; but that, in haying and harvesting, he should want a little. But he had found that a dish of bread and milk, or some other nourishing food, at 11 o'clock, answered his purpose at all times just as well as grog, and he thought a little better. And as he was now entirely free from the habit of taking spirits, he would not on any account be placed in a situation where he should be tempted to renew it.

Such were the feelings of men who had always been accustomed to the practice of taking spirits, till they came into Mr. B——'s employment, and who afterwards had not taken a drop. They had tried both sides, and had found, by experience, that the practice of taking ardent spirits is utterly useless; nay, that it is positively hurtful. It was their united testimony, that they enjoyed better health, were more happy, could do more work, and with less fatigue, than when they took spirits.

They said, to be sure, that they found it hard to do without it at first. And so would a man who had been in the habit of taking laudanum, or any poison, that was not fatal, but was stimulating and pleasant to the taste, however destructive it might be in the end to his constitution. But after they had freed themselves from the habit of taking spirits, they found no inconvenience; but were in all respects better than they were before. And they acknowledged that they were exceedingly indebted to him, who, by his wise regulations, had been the means of improving their condition. The following were some of the advantages to *them*.

1. They had a better appetite, partook of their food with a keener relish, and it was more nourishing to them than before.

2. They possessed much greater vigor and activity, both of body and mind.

3. They performed the same labor with much greater ease; and were in a great measure free from that lassitude and fatigue to which they were before accustomed.

4. They had greater wages, and they laid up a much greater portion of what they had. Before, numbers used to spend a great portion of their wages in scenes of amusement and dissipation. Now, they have no inclination to frequent such scenes. The consequence is, they lay up more money. They are, also, more serious in their deportment, spend more of their leisure time in useful reading, much oftener peruse the Scriptures, and attend public worship; and they are more attentive to all the means of grace. In a word, they are more likely to become useful and happy in this life, and to be prepared for lasting blessedness in the life to come.

5. Their example will be more likely to be useful to those around them; and that for both worlds.

The following are some of the advantages to *their employer.*

1. The men, he says, in the course of the year, do more work, in a better manner, and at a much less expense of tools.

2. He can now with much greater ease have a place for every thing, and every thing in its place.

3. When a stone has fallen from the wall it is now laid up, as the men are passing by, without his mentioning it. The gates are locked, and the bars put up; so that the cattle do not, as before, get in and destroy the crops.

4. His summer work is done in such season, that earth, loam, etc., is carted into the yard in the fall, instead of being carted in in the spring, as before. The consequence is, when carried out it is richer, and renders the farm more productive.

5. His barns, in winter, are kept clean, and less fodder

is wasted. The cattle and horses are daily curried, and appear in better order.

6. When his men go into the forests, instead, as before, of cutting down the nearest, thriftiest, and largest trees, they cut those that are decayed, crooked, and not likely to grow any better; pick up those that are blown down, and thus leave the forests in a better state.

7. The men are more uniform, still, and peaceable; are less trouble in the house, and more contented with their manner of living.

8. At morning and evening prayer, they are more ready than before to attend, and in season; appearing to esteem it not only a duty, but a privilege and a pleasure to be present, and unite with the family in the daily worship of God.

9. On the Sabbath, instead of wishing, as before, to stay at home, or to spend the day in roving about the fields, rivers, and forests, they choose statedly and punctually to attend public worship. In a word, their whole deportment, both at home and abread, is improved, and to a greater extent than any, without witnessing it, can well imagine.

All these and many more advantages resulted from their abstaining *entirely, and at all times,* from the use of ardent spirits.

Nor were the benefits confined to them and their employer. Some of his *neighbors,* witnessing the complete success of his system, have themselves adopted it. When Mr. B—— went into that part of the country, many of the farmers in his neighborhood were in debt. Their farms were mortgaged, some for $300, some for $500, and some for $1000, or more. They complained much of *hard times,* especially for farmers.

Mr. B—— told them that so long as they continued to drink rum, they must expect hard times; for it was no profit, but a great expense, and in more ways than they imagined. They came to him to borrow money to save

their farms from attachment. But he told them, No. It will do men who continue to drink rum no good to have money. Nay, it will be to them an evil. The sooner their property is gone, and they have nothing with which to buy rum, the better. For then they will do less mischief than if they have money, and continue to drink rum. But, said he, if you will leave off the use of spirits, and not take a drop for three months, I will lend you money, and you may keep it, by paying the interest, as long as you continue to take no ardent spirits. But when I learn that you begin to take it, I shall call for the money. Some went away in disgust. Others said, As Mr. B—— can do without rum, why cannot we? and if we can, it will be a great saving of expense. They made the experiment, and found that they could, without the least inconvenience, do without it. After a few months, they made known to Mr. B—— the result; and he helped them to as much money as they needed. They continued to do without spirits, and they had none used by men in their employment. Their business began to prosper, and their prospects to brighten. Their debts are now paid, and their farms free from all incumbrance. The times with them have altered, and they are now thriving, respectable, and useful members of the community.

Others, who a few years ago were in no worse a condition than they, but who continued the practice of drinking spirits, have lost their farms; lost their reputation; lost their health, and eventually their lives; and there is reason to fear, their souls. By the temperate but habitual use of spirits, they formed an *intemperate appetite*. This at first was occasionally, and then habitually indulged; and they were ruined for both worlds. The evil may extend to their children, and children's children.

But those who have entirely relinquished the use of spirits, until the desire for it is removed, have experienced a wonderful transformation in their feelings, their conduct, and their prospects. And the change is visible not only in them, but their families, and all their concerns. Their

windows are not broken out as before; nor their gates and garden-fences falling down. The kitchen does not smoke as it used to do, because they keep it more *clean*, have drier and better wood, and lay it on the fire in a better manner. The wife does not scold as she once did, because she is well provided for, is treated kindly, and has encouragement to labor. The children are not now in rags, but are comfortably and decently clad; they are obedient, respectful, and mannerly; and appear to be growing up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. In short, they appear almost like a new race of beings. And if they should never again adopt the practice of taking ardent spirits, there is vastly more reason than before, to hope that they will be led by the word and Spirit of God to such a course of conduct as will greatly increase their happiness and usefulness on earth, and be the means of preparing them, through grace, for the everlasting joys of heaven.

Should each individual in our country adopt the same course, the following are some of the advantages which would result from it.

1. They would enjoy better health, be able to perform more labor, and would live to a greater age.

2. The evils of intemperance would soon be done away: for all who are now intemperate, and continue so, will soon be dead, and no others will be found to succeed them.

3. There will be a saving every year of more than *thirty millions of dollars*, which are now expended for ardent spirits. There will be a saving of more than two-thirds of all the expense of supporting the poor, which, in Massachusetts alone, would amount to more than $600,000 annually. And there would be a saving of all that idleness and dissipation which intemperance occasions, and of the expense of more than two-thirds of all the criminal prosecutions in the land. In one of our large cities, in which there were one thousand prosecutions for crimes, more than eight hundred of them were found to have sprung from the use of ardent spirits.

4. There would be a saving of a vast portion of sickness; and of the lives probably of thirty thousand persons every year.

Let these four considerations be added together, and traced in their various bearings and consequences upon the temporal and eternal welfare of men; and then let each individual say, whether, in view of all the evils connected with the practice of taking ardent spirits, he can, in the sight of God, be justified in continuing the practice. That it is *not necessary,* has been fully proved. No one thinks it to be necessary, except those who use it. And *they* would not think so, if they were not in the habit of using it. Let any man *leave off entirely* the use of ardent spirits for only one year, and he will find by his own experience that it is not necessary or useful. The fathers of New England did not use it, nor did their children. They were never, as a body, in the practice of taking it. And yet they enjoyed better health, attained to a larger stature, and, with fewer comforts of life, performed more labor, endured more fatigue, and lived, upon an average, to a greater age than any generation of their descendants who have been in the practice of taking spirits. As it was not necessary for the fathers of New England, it is certain that it is not necessary for their descendants, or for any portion of our inhabitants. Hundreds of healthy, active, respectable, and useful men, who *now* do not use it, can testify that it is not necessary. And this will be the testimony of every one who will only relinquish entirely the use of it.

It is by the temperate and habitual use of ardent spirits, that *intemperate appetites* are formed. And the temperate use of it cannot be continued, without, in many cases, forming intemperate appetites; and after they are formed, multitudes will be destroyed by their gratification.

Natural appetites, such as are implanted in our constitution by the Author of nature, *do not by their gratification increase in their demands.* What satisfied them years ago, will satisfy them now. But *artificial appetites,* which are

formed by the wicked practices of men, are *constantly increasing in their demands.* What satisfied them once, will *not* satisfy them now. And what satisfies them now, will not satisfy them in future. They are constantly crying, "*Give, give.*" And there is not a man, who is in the habitual use of ardent spirits, who is not in danger of dying a drunkard. Before he is aware, an intemperate appetite may be formed, the gratification of which may prove his temporal and eternal ruin. And if the practice should not come to this result with regard to himself, it may with regard to his children, and children's children. It may with regard to his neighbors, and their children. It may extend its baleful influences far and wide; and transmit them, with all their innumerable evils, from generation to generation.

Can, then, *temperate, sober men be clear from guilt,* in continuing a practice which is costing annually more than $30,000,000; increasing more than threefold the poor-rates, and the crimes of the country; undermining the health and constitution of its inhabitants; and cutting off annually thirty thousand lives!

There is tremendous guilt somewhere. And it is a truth which ought to press with overwhelming force upon the mind of every sober man, that a portion of this guilt rests upon *every one* who, with a knowledge of facts, continues the *totally unnecessary and awfully pernicious practice of taking ardent spirits.* Each individual ought, without delay, in view of eternity, to clear himself, and neither by precept nor example, ever again encourage or even connive at this deadly evil.

No. 177.

INSTITUTION AND OBSERVANCE

OF

THE SABBATH.

"REMEMBER THE SABBATH-DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY." EXOD. 20 : 8.

THE laws of God are not arbitrary. They are reasonable; each having regard to the well-being of man as truly as to the honor and glory of God. Their tendency in every instance is evidently beneficial; and he who breaks them, not only "sins against God, but wrongs his own soul." They enjoin nothing but what is conducive to man's happiness, and prohibit nothing that would not ultimately injure him; so that the observance of every commandment of God, is as much our interest as our duty.

Among the richest blessings of heaven bestowed upon man, is the institution of the Sabbath. It was made for him, and fitted to his condition; to give him rest from labor and anxiety, afford him time to acquire the knowledge of his Author and destination, and remind him of the rest that remains for him in heaven. But when the judgment is darkened, and the affections perverted, our greatest blessings are often viewed as restraints upon our enjoyments. Hence, there ever has been a disposition in man to disregard this day: some rashly reject its observance, and the word upon which its authority is founded; others, who avow their belief in the Scriptures, profess to doubt the

moral obligation of the Sabbath, and contend that, although it was obligatory under the Jewish dispensation, this obligation has been done away by the introduction of Christianity.

It is wise frequently to review our opinions, and consider the evidence upon which they stand; and the writer invites the reader to accompany him to the word of God, to examine what is written in reference to this day. We will first notice the *institution of the Sabbath*, and secondly, *the manner in which it should be observed.*

I. *The* INSTITUTION *of the Sabbath.* By the Sabbath, we understand a day rendered sacred by divine appointment, dedicated to rest and religious purposes, and comprising successively one-seventh part of our time. We shall consider,

1. *Its origin.* The institution of the Sabbath is not only divine, but coeval with the creation; it was enjoined upon man previous to the fall, when in a state of paradisiacal purity. When all was holiness and excellency, before sin had marred the works of God; when every place might be a temple, and every moment a suitable time to worship; even then did God set apart one-seventh of the time for his more especial service. It was at this time, "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it," Gen. 2 : 3; made it a day of peculiar blessing and manifestation; sanctified, set it apart from a common to a sacred use, and gave a sanction to his institution by his own example in resting on that day. This is the origin of the Sabbath.

Had this sacred day never been given until the enactment of the Mosaic ritual, there might have been some conjecture, that it formed a part of those shadows which were to pass away with the Jewish polity. But God gave the Sabbath to Adam, when all nations were seminally in him, and he stood the father and representative of them all.

Therefore, this injunction could not have been designed, exclusively, for one nation, dispensation, or portion of time. Had Adam remained innocent, this first law of his Maker would have been obligatory, not only on him, but on his posterity through their successive generations. And the introduction of sin cannot have abrogated this law, or rendered it unnecessary. If it were necessary before the fall, it surely is much more so after it.

We might, with the same propriety, set aside the institution of *marriage*. The Sabbath and marriage were enjoined at the same time, and are the only institutions given before man became a fallen creature. None will pretend to affirm that the latter was annulled by the apostasy of man. It existed before and after the introduction of sin, under the law, and under the Gospel. Though the relation of man towards his Maker is changed, yet the institution of marriage is not changed; it is now as at the beginning. So, through every dispensation, it has been the unalterable law of God, that one-seventh portion of time should be dedicated to his especial service.

2. *Its perpetuity.* Having stated the origin of the Sabbath, we shall now examine what evidence we have that it was known and observed prior to the promulgation of the law. From the time of the first family to that of the deluge, we have strong intimations that a sacred day was known and at least partially observed. Cain and Abel brought their offerings, as the common reading has it, "in process of time," Gen. 4 : 3; but literally, and as it is in the margin, "at the end of days." Of what days? But one division of days had been yet mentioned, and that was of the days of the week, the Sabbath being the last, or seventh day. Nothing is more reasonable than to suppose, that the end of the days of the week is here intended; especially when it is recollected that this period of days had

been already fixed, and the passage refers to an act of religious worship which was to be performed.

It is also evident, that days were reckoned by portions of seven in the time of Noah. The Lord said unto him, "Yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth." Gen. 7 : 4. Again, at the return of the dove, "he stayed seven other days before he sent her forth the third time." Returning with an olive-leaf, "he stayed yet other seven days," and then dismissed her from the ark. From these circumstances it is highly probable that the Sabbath was transmitted by tradition from Adam to this period. What other reason can be assigned for Noah's observing these revolutions of seven days while in the ark?

Moreover, every scholar knows that seven was used by the Greek and Roman classics as a number of fulness or perfection; and that the nations of the east, in all ages, have had a term of days, consisting of a cycle of seven. How can it be accounted for, that so many nations, in different ages and countries, should agree upon this peculiar division of their time, if it be not through a tradition concerning the space of time employed in creation, or the institution of a weekly Sabbath to commemorate that event?

During the bondage of the children of Israel in Egypt, we are not informed that the Sabbath was observed; but it does not appear to have been forgotten. For, about forty days after their departure from bondage, when the Lord first gave them the manna, it is spoken of in such a manner as to intimate that it had been previously known among them. "And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man. And Moses said, This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord. Six days shall ye gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass,

there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?" Exod. 16 : 22–28. In this passage the Sabbath is referred to as something already known, and the people are blamed for not keeping it. Now it must be observed, that this event occurred in the wilderness of Sin, before the children of Israel had reached Mount Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from Egypt, at least fifteen days before the giving of the law, which took place some time in the third month. Exod. 19 : 1. But had it never been given until this time, how could it be said, "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments?" Does it not appear more probable that it had been known among them during their bondage, though little attended to ; and that now, being delivered, and called to be God's chosen people, they were required to pay a more particular attention to it ?

I have been thus particular in discussing this part of the subject, to show that the original institution of the Sabbath had no connection whatever with Jewish ceremonies, it having been instituted, acknowledged, and observed, before they were ever given. And hence, the arguments so often used in relation to the ceremonial origin and nature of the Sabbath, are altogether founded in ignorance of the word of God, and the history of these times.

The manner in which the fourth commandment was announced at the giving of the law, is another proof of what has been already stated. Of the other commandments it is said, "*Thou shalt*," but of this, "*Remember*," which seems to indicate the renewal of an old commandment, and not the enactment of a new one. For if the Sabbath had not been previously known to the children of Israel, how could they be called upon to *remember* that of

which they had never heard? The truth is, as this was the most ancient institution, God now called upon his people, the depositories of his truth, to keep it in mind; and being about to make known to them a summary of his will, renewed its sanction, and made it one of the ten words of perpetual obligation.

That the law of the Sabbath makes no part of the ceremonial code, which was delivered some time afterwards, is very evident from the following considerations:

1. This commandment was spoken by God on Mount Sinai, in hearing of all the people, and attended by the most awful sanctions of glory and terror; whereas the law of ceremonies was simply given to Moses, to give to the people. Exod. 19 : 16–25 ; 21 : 1.

2. It makes one of the commands of the decalogue, and was twice written by the finger of God on tables of stone, indicative of its lasting obligation. Exod. 34 : 1. But this was not the case with the ceremonial law, which was verbally delivered to Moses, and written by him.

3. It was laid up in the ark of the covenant, among the most sacred deposits of the nation, as a sign of its excellency and perpetuity; but the ceremonial ordinance was placed in a book on the outside of the ark. Exod. 25 : 16 ; Heb. 9 : 4. From this renewal of its sanction to the advent of Jesus Christ, it was sacredly observed as the statute law of the Jews through their various changes.

But because the fourth commandment has not been particularly mentioned in the New Testament as a moral precept, binding upon Christians, some have objected that, under this dispensation, there is no law in relation to it. Every such objector should weigh the following considerations:

1. The Sabbath was given to Adam, the representative of all nations, in a state of innocency, before any cere-

mony of religion or type of Jesus Christ had ever been instituted.

2. As at the establishment of the law of ceremonies, one day was found distinguished above all the rest for religious service; so the abrogation of these ordinances could not annul that which existed before it, and was in nowise connected with it.

3. As the law of the Sabbath had never been repealed nor *limited* in its duration, it was altogether unnecessary to repeat or enjoin it again, when it had already received the most tremendous sanctions from Sinai. Nor was there any necessity, in the time of our Saviour, to call up its authority or observance; for every one to whom he addressed himself acknowledged its obligation, and observed it with a most scrupulous exactness. But Jesus Christ has given us the fullest assurance, that the fourth commandment has not been abrogated under the Gospel, by giving us his constant example in observing that day. "*When Jesus came to Nazareth, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day.*" Luke 4:16. From this passage, we learn that there was a Sabbath in the time of our Saviour, that religious assemblies met on that day, and that it was his *custom,* or *usual practice,* to meet with them. When the Jews charged the disciples with a breach of their superstitious observance of the Sabbath, had our Saviour designed the abrogation of the fourth commandment, it would have been full in point to have stated it at this time; but he did not—*he vindicated* them on the ground that they had not broken it.

3. *Its change.* Without entering into the merits of the hypothesis which supposes that the true Sabbath of the creation was lost in the time of Joshua or Hezekiah, by the unusual prolongation of some days, we shall adduce arguments more within the observation of general readers.

And here it should be remembered, that the keeping of the precise seventh day of the week may be considered apart from the design of the institution itself, which was, that *one-seventh portion of our time* should be dedicated to rest and religious purposes. But it may be asked, "Upon what authority has the day been changed?" In reply to this, we answer, Upon the same authority by which it was first instituted. The Saviour of the world declared himself to be "the Lord of the Sabbath;" having the same authority to change it as to institute it.

After the resurrection, he was forty days with his disciples, "giving them commandments, and speaking of things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Acts 1 : 2, 3. What these commandments were, we are not informed in the gospels; but is it not reasonable to suppose that this important change in the Sabbath was among them, since, from that period, the first day of the week was observed by the unanimous practice of all the apostles? The lawfulness, however, of observing the first day of the week for the true Sabbath, may be proved,

1. *From the sanction of Jesus Christ.* On the first day of the week, the Christian Sabbath, he arose, having finished the work of redemption, and triumphed over death and hell. Whether the disciples kept the first day of the week in honor of the resurrection, or did it by express command given by Christ during the forty days he continued with them, it is very evident that he sanctioned their meeting on this day, and has himself conferred peculiar honor upon it. On the first day of the week he met two of his disciples going to Emmaus, and opened their hearts to understand the Scriptures; on the evening of the same day he met the eleven, when Thomas was absent, and gave them his blessing. John 20 : 19. Again, eight days after, being the next first day of the week, when the disciples were assembled,

and Thomas with them, Jesus chose this day again to meet with them. Verse 26. Although Christ met frequently with his disciples, no mention is made of any other day but the first day of the week, and this always in connection with the assembling of the disciples for religious purposes. Now, it does not appear that this meeting with the disciples was accidental, but designed; and having chosen the first above the rest, and mentioned it by name, our Saviour has authorized the observance of it by his own example and practice, which ought, with us, to have the force of law.

2. *From the transfer of the peculiar blessings of the seventh to the first day of the week.* On this day Christ not only manifested himself to his disciples, and opened their hearts to understand the Scriptures, but breathed on them, that they should receive the Holy Ghost. John 20 : 19–23. The ancient promise of the Holy Spirit, which kings and prophets desired to see, was fulfilled on the first day of the week. "When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place; and were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with tongues." In Greek, *Pentekonta* signifies *fifty;* and *Pentekoste* was a feast of the Jews, held in commemoration of the giving of the law, and always came fifty days after the passover, which this year fell on the Jewish Sabbath; consequently, the feast of pentecost came on the first day of the week, the day of our Lord's resurrection, and the stated day for public worship among the disciples. Until this extraordinary effusion of the Holy Spirit, the Christian never fully superseded the Jewish dispensation. How remarkably, then, did God confirm the keeping of this day, by abolishing on it the latter dispensation, ushering in the former, and fitting his disciples for the work of planting his church, and converting the world. The descent of this extraordinary blessing on the first day of the week, may be regarded as a

solemn approbation of the Christian Sabbath, and a seal to its institution from heaven.

3. *From the practice of the divinely inspired apostles* and founders of the church. Nothing is more evident from the Acts of the Apostles, and the early history of the church, than that our Lord's first disciples, and their immediate followers, met for religious worship uniformly on "the first day of the week, which afterwards was called *the Lord's day*." Rev. 1 : 10. When Paul visited Troas, he waited some days, until the brethren should come together on the first day of the week, that he might preach to them, and administer the Lord's supper. "And upon the *first day of the week*, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." Acts 20 : 7. Again, Paul recommends that the collection for the poor should be taken up on that day. "Now, concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the *first day of the week* let every one of you lay by him in store." 1 Cor. 16 : 2. Now, why *on the first day* of the week, and not on the seventh, or any other day? 1. Because this was the stated day for their public meeting, on which their charity could be presented with greater convenience. 2. Because it was now fully in place of the Jewish Sabbath, on which day, it is well known, they made collections in all their synagogues for the poor.

It is unnecessary, however, to multiply proof. The whole current of ecclesiastical history shows that it has been the constant and uninterrupted practice of the church throughout the world, since the days of the apostles, to observe the first day of the week as the true Sabbath. The ancient fathers celebrated this day, and made the observance of it a badge of their religion, as appears from the writings of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Origen. Ignatius,

who wrote in the first century, says, in his epistle on the Lord's day, "Omnis Christi amator Dominicum celebrat diem, reginam et principem;" every lover of Christ celebrates the Lord's day as the most excellent and chief of all days.

We will close the consideration of this part of our subject, by answering some of the most common objections to the moral obligations of the Sabbath. It may be asked, "Does not the apostle remove all distinctions between days, and intimate that the Sabbath is done away, in Romans 14 : 5? 'One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.' And again, in Colossians 2 : 16 : 'Let no man judge you in meat and drink, or in respect of a holy-day, or of the new-moon, or of the sabbath-days.'"

In these verses there is evidently an allusion to a Jewish distinction between clean and unclean meats, and the observance of certain days or festivals, such as the passover, pentecost, feast of tabernacles, and sabbatical weeks and years; but no allusion whatever is made to the weekly Sabbath: it was not at all the subject of doubt or controversy at this time. The plain state of the case is this: There was a dispute between the Jewish and Gentile converts, in relation to the observance of the above-mentioned festivals; the former, holding these days sacred, judged them of moral obligation, and wished the converts from heathenism to keep them; while the latter, having never been taught their importance, did not regard them, but rather despised the others for doing so. In the passage from Romans, the apostle enjoins mutual forbearance in things which were indifferent: if the Jewish convert still "regarded" the festival sincerely to the Lord, he was accepted; and if the Gentile "regarded it not, esteeming

every day" of the six equally important, he did not sin. And in the quotation from Colossians, the apostle warns them against Judaizing teachers, who required them to observe days, meats, and sabbaths; that is, the above festivals, certain meats, and those weekly feasts which lasted seven days successively, held after the ingathering of corn. Deut. 16 : 11–15. Thus, by attending to the scope of the apostle's argument, all is plain, and every one must see that there is no reference to the weekly Sabbath.

Again, it may be said, that "the Sabbath is not mentioned in the decrees of the apostles, Acts 15, as obligatory upon Christians." Simply for this reason: it was not among those subjects of controversy which called for the consideration of the apostles at Jerusalem.

But it may be further objected, "that there is no express command in the New Testament for keeping the Sabbath." Because there was no necessity that a precept, so universally acknowledged, should be repeated: none, at this time, doubted its obligation; every Christian felt himself bound to keep the fourth commandment. And as to the particular day, the example of Christ, the sanction of the Holy Spirit, and the practice of the apostles, who delivered nothing but what they received, 1 Cor. 11 : 23, were sufficient to sanction all the followers of Christ in the observance of this day.

Having proved the divine institution of the Sabbath, as well as the moral and perpetual obligation to keep it, we shall now show,

II. *The* MANNER IN WHICH IT SHOULD BE OBSERVED. This is expressed in the command to "keep it holy," which implies, 1. The total cessation from ordinary business. 2. The observance of religious duties.

1. The extent of this holy rest is learned from the com-

mandment itself. "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates." Exod. 20 : 9, 10. This prohibition is very extensive; but as the Sabbath was made for man, not to be a burden to him, but a blessing, the following works do not appear to fall under its restrictions:

1. *Works of piety.* Such as the bodily labor necessary to the performance of religious worship; as, under the Mosaic dispensation, the killing, washing, and preparing beasts for sacrifice, the calling of assemblies, and making short journies to wait on the Lord; and, under the Gospel, the labor of preaching, prayer, walking to church, and so much of the service of our beasts as to take us to public worship, when, on account of the distance, or bodily indisposition, we could not otherwise attend. Also the attendance on Sabbath-schools, to give or receive so much instruction as will enable the rising generation to read the holy Scriptures.

2. *Works of mercy and charity.* Visiting the poor and sick, and carrying them food, clothing, or medicine. Watering and feeding cattle, and giving relief to man or beast in distress.

3. *Of necessity.* Such as could not have been previously provided for, and could not have been delayed: the preparing of necessary food, quenching fire, etc.

The various ways in which this day may be *profaned*, can be seen by a reference to Isaiah: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath—not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, then thou shalt delight thyself in the Lord." 58 : 13, 14. From this passage, we learn that the Sabbath may be broken,

1. *By doing our own ways.* By following our own labor, business, or any part of our daily avocation. "Six days shalt thou labor and do all *thy* work"—the Sabbath the Lord claims as *his*. *Our own ways:* such as buying or selling; opening shops to sell fruit, beer, cakes, ardent spirits, or other merchandise, as is often profanely and impiously practised in villages and large cities. This precept also condemns the custom of exposing fish in markets on the morning of the Lord's day. Cannot our citizens subsist one day out of seven, without feasting on newly-caught fish? The plea that they will spoil, is futile; fishermen ought, with others, to remember this day, and enjoy its blessings; they should not take their fish so near this well-known season of rest. Read Nehemiah 13 : 16.

Also the running of mills, stages, steamboats, travelling on business, and sailing vessels in rivers; and preparing meat, bread, and vegetables, on the afternoon of the Sabbath, for an early market on the next day.

This commandment may be broken by proxy; suffering children, servants, or those in our employment, to do business for us: also in our property; by letting out horses, carriages, boats, or, in a word, permitting any of our effects under our control to be used on this day.

2. *By finding our own pleasure;* our own amusements and recreations; hunting, fishing, rambling, playing at ball, visiting, or lounging about taverns and grogshops, those fruitful nurseries of every vice. What a fearful account will this miserable class of offenders have to give, as well as those mercenary creatures who open their houses to entertain them in their rebellion against God! But there is another, a more genteel class of Sabbath-breakers, who, perhaps, would be ashamed to be found among either of these classes: such as allow themselves in visiting their friends, riding to take the air, recreating their health and

spirits by rambles into the country, jaunting for pleasure by stage, steamboat, or otherwise, giving or receiving invitations to dinners, and similar pastimes, on the Lord's day.

But the common excuse is, "They are so confined to labor and business, that they have no time for them on any other day; and must they be deprived of them?" Proper application to business, and a right distribution of time, would afford every one some time to recreate his body and relieve his mind, without breaking the Sabbath. Again, if they are so closely confined on the week, do they not require their time on this day to learn the will of God, and seek his favor? If the soul is worth more than the body, has it not the first demand on their time and attention? But who ever served God for naught, or observed the Sabbath to his injury?

3. *By speaking our own words.* Under this prohibition are included worldly conversation and study, in relation to business, pleasure, or secular intelligence; such as conversing about our property or earthly prospects, striking bargains, or planning the transactions of the future week; the reading of books or papers, for political or commercial information; writing letters on business, composing mere literary works, or pursuing the usual course of secular study. It is said that a man's country may be known by his speech; so, when a person is heard conversing about worldly affairs on the Lord's day, it is quite a sure sign that he is from beneath; that his earthly and grovelling soul does not belong to the sublimer regions of spirituality and heaven.

II. *The dedication of the day to religious duties.* Although the Sabbath is a day of rest, yet it is not to be spent in sleep and idleness. If we are released from the labor and concern of the week, it is only that we may engage in the acquisition of more substantial riches. That the

performance of religious duties is necessary to the proper sanctification of the day, may be proved from the usage of the Jews, Lev. 23 : 2, 3; the conduct of our Saviour, Luke 4 : 16; and the practice of the apostles, Acts 20 : 7; 1 Cor. 16 : 2. These duties may be divided into *public, domestic,* and *private.*

1. The Sabbath being the Lord's day, on it he should be *publicly worshipped.* Every one should join the assembly of his people in the great congregation, to hear his word, sing his praise, and offer up their petitions. If it is the duty of the ministers to preach, it is equally that of the people to hear: the duty of the one, and the obligation of the other, are reciprocal and equally obligatory. Nor is it a small thing, to neglect the public worship of God on this day; it is for "your life." Deut. 32 : 47. Whatever many may think of the public preaching of the word, it is the great means which God has appointed for the conversion of the soul. Rom. 10 : 14–17. "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" In this passage, the hearing of the Gospel preached, which is the power of God unto salvation, is evidently accounted as the means of believing. Rom. 1 : 16.

How many affect to be wise above what is written, endeavoring to persuade themselves and others, that they can as well serve God and seek his blessing on his own day, by abiding at home, reading his word or good books, as by waiting upon him in the great congregation. The one is God's instituted means, which he has promised to honor and bless; the other is not. "By the foolishness of preaching, it pleaseth God to save them that believe." 1 Cor. 1 : 21. The attendance on public worship on the Sabbath is the bounden duty of all: "*Forget not the assembling of your-*

selves together." Should the preaching of the word be distant, let those who fear the Lord, though their number be but two or three, come together for mutual prayer. They cannot expect a blessing at home; for it is neglect of duty to remain in their own dwelling, if health and circumstances allow them to come together.

2. The proper sanctification of the Sabbath includes also *domestic duties;* such as family prayer, instruction of children, and a regard to the observance of the day by all within our gates. Family prayer is not mentioned as peculiar to the Sabbath, but as belonging to every day; larger portions of the Scriptures, however, may be read, and more particular explanations given, on this day, than ordinary attention to business will allow on any other. That the omission of the above duties is a violation of the fourth commandment, is evident from the consideration, that "all within our gates must keep it holy," and that it cannot be so observed, unless God be socially worshipped within our gates.

Children, who by nature are ignorant of their Maker, and inclined to sin, must be *instructed* in his will. For the discharge of this important duty, God has appropriated a part of his day, that every parent and guardian may have time to instruct them in the principles of religion, and to train them up in the performance of its duties. The relation of the parent to the Creator, requires the discharge of this obligation: as the daughter of Pharaoh said to the mother of Moses, "Take this child and nurse him for me," so the Lord commits the souls of the children to the parents. They have been the cause of their existence, and also of imparting to them their original impurity; the Gospel points out their only remedy, and the parents are criminal, if they withhold it from their offspring.

Instruction of children may be considered a peculiar

duty of the Sabbath, because thousands have not time to attend to it on any other day. This duty may be performed by putting into their hands some small compendium of Christian doctrine, such as is generally comprised in catechisms, hearing them recite small portions out of them every Sabbath, explaining familiarly their application to their conduct, and taking them regularly to the church of God. The minds of children require food, as well as their bodies. For this intellectual nurture, the Christian press is teeming with publications, which, for their simplicity and perspicuity, are admirably adapted to impress upon the youthful mind the all-important doctrines of Christianity. Nor should parents ever think money misapplied, which is expended for these publications.

In the southern and south-western states, there are thousands who possess slaves and their children, who are both ignorant and wicked. The master is careful to teach them how to work, and see that they do their work faithfully—should he not take some care to instruct them in the will and service of God? They make a part of his household, they stand "within his gates," and he daily receives the labor of their hands. Standing in this relation to them, an imperious and awfully responsible duty devolves upon him, from which he cannot exonerate himself while he holds them. Do not say with Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" By misfortune or choice you are become so literally, and you are so too in spiritual matters; so that if those within your gates, through your neglect, perish in their sin and ignorance, their blood will be required at your hands.

In the performance of these duties, both to servants and children, many and great difficulties may present themselves; but let all those who wish to save their own souls, be careful that none grow up in their family ignorant of God and their duty, and that they permit none of their

household to profane his day by work, amusements, idleness, or neglect of religious duties. For the discharge of this very difficult and imperious obligation, there will be great need of much grace and wisdom. Let none expect to perform it without supernatural help, and let this consideration lead them continually to God.

3. Having dwelt so long on the importance of domestic duties, a few observations must suffice on those of a *private nature*. These may be comprehended in prayer, meditation, self-examination, and the reading of the Holy Scriptures. Without a proper attention to these, none can duly discharge their other obligations; and as the Sabbath is a day of blessing, it affords time to enter more fully on all these duties; but spend not the morning in sleep, and begin the day early with your Bible and prayer.

Finally, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." Remember it, for the Lord has honored it with his name, and consecrated it to his service; therefore do not profane it, by doing your own ways, finding your own pleasure, or speaking your own words. Remember it—it is a type of heaven—of the rest that remains for the people of God—the absence of every evil—the presence of all good.

The Sabbath is the most salutary institution, designed to give rest to the body, and afford instruction to the mind. Continual labor would degrade the soul, blunt its sensibility, and render it averse to the nobler acts of thought and reflection. If these stated intervals of rest were abolished, vice would predominate, religion cease, and man forget his origin and end. As a political institution, it is one of the best ever given; its influence on the moral and political state of society is so beneficial, that he who, by precept or example, would loosen its obligation, must either be wanting in reflection, or in love to mankind and his country. Therefore remember it. But O, above all, remember it,

because God commands you to do it; he commands you out of the thick cloud and darkness, attended with terror and majesty. He has written it on tables of stone, with his own almighty finger, and proclaimed it with his loud, long-sounding voice, that you may never, never forget it. Remember it, because of the awful judgments inflicted on those individuals and nations who have violated it; on his ancient people, who were driven seventy years into captivity, because they gave not the land its rest; on infidel France, which, a few years ago, mocked at the Sabbath, cast it into oblivion, and divided her year into decades, weeks of ten days, that the Sabbath might be blotted out. And O, remember the awful visitation of God for this profanation; how he thinned her families, wasted her treasures, and drenched her cities with blood! Or think of what has come immediately within your own observation: the carriage accident—the boat disaster—and the faithless gun; or of the gay party who went forth on the Lord's day to find their own pleasure, but who never returned; or, if they returned, were perhaps mangled corpses, monuments of Divine displeasure; of the many thousands who have expiated their crimes in banishment, in the prison, or on the gallows, who dated their first wanderings from the path of rectitude to the profaning of this day. O remember these, and a nameless list of similar judgments, and ever revereñce God's holy day.

JOY IN HEAVEN OVER THE PENITENT.

"THERE is joy in the presence of the angels of God," said our blessed Saviour, "over one sinner that repenteth." No person can hear this declaration, and heartily believe it, without feeling that the repentance of a sinner is an event of great importance. Angels do not rejoice without good reason; nor without seeing the subject of their joy connected with momentous results to the kingdom of Jehovah. The fact that they rejoice over one that repenteth, and that this is revealed by the Son of God to our world, is perfect demonstration that it is an event of amazing importance.

Even men, if wise, and acquainted with the subject, do not rejoice without good reason. Should an event occasion joy to the inhabitants only of a single city; should you go through every street, and lane, and avenue, enter every house, and find every family rejoicing with exceeding great joy, you could not avoid the conviction, that something had occurred of great importance. They publish it. And joy spreads from city to city; from country to country; till every kingdom, and town, and family, and soul on the globe, partake in it; there is joy wherever there is a heart to feel, or a tongue to utter it, and the whole earth breaks forth in one universal acclamation; and you cannot but feel that something has occurred of amazing importance. It seems to you that its importance transcends human conception.

And as you stand and wonder, another event takes place. No visible messenger publishes it; but heralds unseen carry the tidings upwards, and a flame kindles on the heavenly plains; it spreads through the spirits of just men made perfect, through the ranks of angels, of cherubim and seraphim, till multitudes that no man can number, in celestial strains, and with immortal tongues, pour forth their hallelujahs, and drown the expression of every earthly joy; and you cannot but feel, with unutterable intensity, that the cause of their

joy is inconceivably momentous. It must be graven indelibly, and must tell on the annals of the universe for ever. And what is the cause of their joy? *The repentance of a sinner.* Yes, let it be told, for the Son of God has published it, let it reach every ear in creation, and touch every heart in the universe. There is joy in the presence of all the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. And this, too, not merely when that sinner is rich, and learned, and moral, and respectable, and useful among men; but when he is poor, and ignorant, and immoral, and debased; whose look is pollution, and whose influence is death. Let such a sinner repent, and angels rejoice even over him.

Why then did they not rejoice over Judas? He repented, and went away, and hanged himself; and went to his own place. Angels had no joy over him. And it would have been better for Judas, if he never had been born. Ah, his repentance was not of the right kind. It had in it no holiness; no hatred of sin; no love to God. It was only conscious guilt, and fear of punishment. Sorrow he had; but it was that of the world, which worketh death. Other sinners, in other generations, have repented like Judas; and like him, have gone to their own place. Angels had no joy over them; and it would have been better for them, if they never had been born.

The repentance in which angels delight, is a turning from all known sin, with the sorrow of one who loves God, in view of his own rebellion against him. The person who thus repents, forsakes his sins, because they are offensive to God and ruinous to men. He engages heartily in the discharge of all known duty, for the purpose of glorifying God, and doing good. Let a sinner exercise this repentance, and angels will rejoice with exceeding great joy, though he be the most obscure individual that ever lived; or, if you will, the most debased and the most abominable.

In view of this truth, made known by the God of heaven to our world, an important question arises, namely, *Why* is there joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth?

I will endeavor, in a plain and scriptural manner, to answer this question. In doing this, I observe, that angels may rejoice over him, because his repentance shows that he is born of God; because he will be delivered from the second death; because God will be his eternal portion; and because his influence on the kingdom of Jehovah will be for ever changed.

1. His repentance shows that he is *born of God.* A change, called in the Bible being born of God, he has declared to be essential to the kingdom of heaven. Before, this sinner had never experienced it. He was born only of the flesh. His very mind was carnal, and enmity against God. He was an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger to the covenant of promise, without hope, and without God in the world. Though Jesus had entered the holy place with his blood, having obtained eternal redemption; and though *whosoever* would, might come unto him and have life, he would not come. He hated light, and loved darkness, because his deeds were evil. And he was preparing to plunge into blackness of darkness for ever. Angels knew, that, notwithstanding all that Christ had done to open the gate of heaven, or ever would do, he must be born again, or he could never enter there. Into that place entereth nothing that defileth. He was defiled; and, without a renovation by the Spirit of God, must depart accursed into that fire, from which the smoke of his torment would ascend up for ever and ever. Angels knew this. And they knew that he must experience a change in this life; for in the grave there is no work, and after death no redemption. He that is holy, must be holy still; and he that is filthy, be filthy still. They were therefore as anxious to see him born of God, as to have him an inhabitant of heaven; and to see him born of God soon; for the wicked, they knew, do not live out half their days.

And when the voice of infinite kindness said, Go ye out into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring hither the poor, and the halt, and the maimed, and the blind; compel them to come in, that my house may be filled; for all things

are ready: when the Spirit and the bride said, Come; and he that heard said, Come; not an angel dissented; but, Come, Come, echoed through the courts of heaven. And when, through marvellous grace, this sinner did come, weary and heavy laden, loathing his transgressions, and casting himself, guilty and ruined, at the feet of his Lord, with that godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation, they knew that he was born of God, and had passed from death unto life. A burst of glory broke through heaven as they sung, He was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. Nor are they mistaken. He is now meek and lowly, he is humble and contrite in heart. He walks softly before God, and trembles at his word. And the Most High, though the heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, comes down and dwells with the lowly, and takes up his abode with the contrite in heart. He forsakes every evil and false way, cleaves with full purpose of heart unto the Lord, and delights in keeping his commandments. He has experienced a resurrection with Christ, and he manifests it by seeking those things that are above, where Christ is; and living not unto himself, but unto him that died for him and rose again. He begins already to shine in the glory of the divine image, and angels are not ashamed to own him. Though he was a child of the devil, he has become, through boundless grace, a child of the Lord Almighty.

2. He will be *delivered from the second death.* What the second death is, none but God fully knows. About it we know nothing, except what we see and feel of the effects of sin, and what God has told us. Finite minds, in the course of finite duration, can know comparatively little about the second death. Yet we know enough, if we believe God, to make us feel, and that deeply, that it is something overwhelmingly dreadful. It is, he tells us, everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord: going away into devouring fire; into everlasting burnings, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And who can dwell with

devouring fire; who can inherit everlasting burnings? The bare prospect of it has made the hardened sinner, in this life, curse his existence, and cry out in agony, "Oh, the insufferable pangs of hell and damnation. Could I, by lying a thousand years in that flame, escape! But ah, millions of millions of years will bring me no nearer the end of my torment than one poor hour. Oh eternity! eternity! who can fathom the abyss of eternity, or paraphrase the words for ever and ever?"

To this amazing suffering, that poor sinner, before he repented, was every moment exposed. His ways were ways of death; his steps took hold on hell. He walked, wherever he went, over the bottomless pit; and nothing but the brittle thread of life, which angels knew might be sundered in a moment, kept him from endless perdition. He hung as on a single thread, while the flames were flashing all around him. But, glory to God in the highest, he is snatched as a brand from the burning; and saved, through grace, by repentance and faith, from the second death. All the misery that he would have endured, amounting, in the course of endless being, to more than all that has ever yet been endured by all creatures from the creation, is struck out of existence; or rather is prevented from ever coming in. No wonder there is joy in the presence of the angels. God himself rejoices. All holy beings rejoice, and will rejoice for ever; for he is saved from the second death.

3. *Jehovah will be his eternal portion.* Such is the nature of the human soul, that, to be happy, it must have a portion: something without itself to which it can look, and on which it can safely depend for enjoyment. This portion must be adapted to the nature of the soul, be able to satisfy its desires, and be lasting as its existence. Of course, it must be spiritual, boundless, and eternal. It cannot, therefore, be found in creatures. Brutes may have a kind of happiness suited to their nature, from the gifts of God. But souls must have, for their portion, *the Giver.* Gifts, simply, only increase their desires. They never satisfy them. As well may you satisfy fire by increasing fuel, as

satisfy souls by increasing gifts, without the enjoyment of the Giver. Give what he can, without him they are poor. And their poverty will increase, till it be absolute and eternal. This God knows. And to the penitent soul he saith, I am thy God. If father or mother forsake thee, the Lord will take thee up. Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he will sustain thee. All things shall work together for thy good; and thou shalt not want any good thing. He will guide thee by his counsel, and afterwards receive thee to glory. He will be thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward. What it is to have God for a portion, especially an *eternal* portion, none but God fully knows. It is a glory which eye hath not seen, which ear hath not heard, and of which no finite mind can fully conceive.

Worldly men, who seek their happiness in creatures, and have their good things in this life, know nothing of it. They have no conception of the blessedness of enjoying God, and having him for an eternal portion. They therefore see no cause of joy, and do not manifest it, when he becomes the portion of others. Should the sinner who repents receive a kingdom, or an empire, with all their riches and glory, and have the assurance of possessing them through life, they would think his portion immense. But should he receive every kingdom and empire on the globe, with all their riches and glory, and with the certainty of possessing them to the last moment of life, his portion would be as much less than it is now, as the thing made is less than God who made it. His portion is Jehovah. Before him kingdoms and empires are nothing. He taketh the ocean in the hollow of his hand, meteth out the heavens with a span, comprehendeth the dust of the earth in a measure, weigheth the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance. All nations, before him, are as a drop of the bucket, and their glory as the dust of the balance. He taketh them up as a very little thing, and counteth them less than nothing, and vanity.

I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the heavens and the earth fled away. He

is the penitent sinner's portion—his everlasting portion. Though the heavens be wrapped together, and pass away with a great noise, the elements melt with fervent heat, the earth, also, and all that is in it, be burnt up, Jehovah lives; his portion is secure. Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall separate him from the love of God. He shall dwell in his presence, shine in the beauty of his image, and reflect the lustre of his glory, with greater and greater brightness, throughout the universe, for ever. O the mighty contrast with what he would have been, had he not repented. Cast into hell, a brand in devouring fire, to show, by the intensity and eternity of his anguish, the greatness of the guilt of rebelling against God. Now, he is a trophy of grace, to shine as the sun in his strength, and to grow brighter and brighter, in beauty and holiness, to everlasting ages.

4. *His influence on the kingdom of Jehovah will be for ever changed.* No moral being can exist, and act under the government of God, without exerting a moral influence. This influence will be of the same kind with his character, and will have an effect in forming and fixing the character of other moral beings. And it seems to be a characteristic of moral influence, after it is begun, to continue, and, in its consequences, to grow greater and greater. Hence, an amazing responsibility attaches to the holding of a moral existence. A person must exert an influence, let his or her character and condition be what it may; and an influence that will be felt, after earth is dissolved; and will tell on the eternal destinies of men.

Even a single person, born in obscurity, brought up in retirement, and spending his days in private life, exerts an influence that may operate on thousands, ages after he is dead. The effects of this influence will occupy the distinct attention of God, angels, and men, at the day of judgment; and be told by ten thousand thousand, in strains of higher and higher glory, or in tones of deeper and deeper anguish. Then shall the universe begin to see what God means, when

he says, One sinner destroyeth much good. This is the case even with a single person, especially if he is openly vicious, and continues impenitent to the end of life. He is destitute of moral principle; and for the gratifications of sin would sacrifice the glory of God, and all the happiness of his kingdom. The good which he actually destroys by his wickedness, none but God can fully understand. This would be true, did he destroy simply his own soul. But he may destroy multitudes of others. Nor will their destruction be the only evil; but they may be the means of corrupting and destroying others; and they of destroying others; and the evil extend and extend. And were the consequences to stop within the limits of time, it would be comparatively small. But they extend into eternity; and onward, as the poor lost souls gnaw their tongues for pain, and curse their God and King, and look upward.

But when one of these sinners repents, his influence on the world is changed. No longer will he be the means of leading other sinners to destruction, but will now be the means of preparing them for glory. Deeply has he felt the bitterness of sin, and most heartily does he loathe it. Something has he seen of the beauty of holiness, and something has he felt of his obligations to the riches of distinguishing grace. Is he a child? he speaks to his companions of the worth of the soul, the preciousness of Jesus Christ, and the blessedness of serving him. Is he a youth just ripening into manhood? he remembers his Creator, lays up his treasure in heaven, sets a holy example, and lives in earnest for God. This may be the means of the salvation of his associates. Is he a parent? he views his children as bound to the judgment, and to the eternity which is to follow. He feels that to them one thing is needful. He trains them up in the way that they should go; in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And he seeks for them first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, that they may not want any good thing. In all the various relations of life, he labors, by precept and example, to promote the salvation of men.

Nor is the influence of a sinner, who has repented, confined to those with whom he is connected, to whom he may have personal access, and through them to those that come after them. But he may exert an influence, kind, and all-pervading as the dew of heaven, upon multitudes of others. No sooner has he repented, than he becomes a person of *prayer*. He has an interest at the throne of grace, and an effectual Intercessor there. Ask, saith God, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Would any of you, being a father, should a famishing child ask bread, give him a stone; or should he ask a fish, would you give him a serpent? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? And it is especially for the Holy Spirit that such a sinner prays. He has experienced of the exceeding greatness of his power, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead. And it is his heart's desire and prayer to God daily, that others may receive the same infinite blessing. For this his intercessions ascend without ceasing, and are presented by Him who stands at the golden altar, to offer with much incense the prayers of the saints. And how many blessings will, in answer, descend upon the world, no mortal can determine. But this we know, his prayers of faith will be answered. And they will be answered abundantly, not only while he lives, but after he is dead, and onward through all future ages, so long as there is a single petition which, on earth, he offered in faith unto God, that has not been followed with its appropriate blessings. Open your mouths wide, saith God, and I will fill them. And he will manifest his faithfulness. No sooner, in answer to the prayers of one sinner who has repented, is another sinner born of God, than that sinner begins to be the means of saving other sinners, and they of saving others. And the influence, starting from a single individual, may be carried forward, increasing as it goes, and extending in its consequences to all eternity. Go,

then, with that one individual who is born of God, who will be saved himself from the second death, and to whom Jehovah will be an eternal portion; witness him, after twenty years' active service for God, and daily prayer for the salvation of souls, as he lies on the bed of death. Hear him, as he says to his heavenly Father, Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; thy rod, and thy staff, they shall comfort me; and begins to sing, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? I shall behold thy face in righteousness, and shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness. Go with him to the bar of God, and see the heavenly joy depicted on his countenance as he meets the smile of divine approbation, and enter with him, and all whose salvation has in any way been connected with his, upon celestial joys; and, in the light of eternal ages, witness the consequences, in their various bearings and results, to the kingdom of Jehovah; and you will not wonder that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over him that repenteth. He is prepared to be the means of increasing the number of their companions, and adding multitudes to the multitude that no man can number, who shout unto their God and ours, harmonious songs of salvation.

And as the groans of never-dying anguish break on your ear, and the smoke of ever-rising torment meets your eye, and you see what he *would* have been, and would have done, had he not repented; and hear him now, mingling sweetly with ten thousand thousand in loud hallelujahs to the Lamb that was slain, your heart will be full. And if you have a spark of their spirit, you will break forth in accents of glory to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.

1. If there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, then that kind of preaching which is best adapted to convince men of sin, and bring them to repentance, is the preaching which angels approve. While that kind of preaching which is not adapted to con-

vince men of sin, and lead them to repentance, however popular it may be in any place on earth, gives no joy to heaven.

2. If angels rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, then to be the means of bringing one sinner to repentance is a high and peculiar honor. It saves a soul from death. It hides a multitude of sins; and fills with new joy the court of heaven.

3. If angels rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, then those persons who labor to bring sinners to repentance, and who rejoice over them when they do repent, show that they are, in temper, like angels; and are preparing to be everlasting partakers of their joy. While those persons who do not labor to bring sinners to repentance, and who do not rejoice over them when they repent, show that they are like, *not* angels, but beings of an opposite spirit; and that without a great change they can never see the kingdom of God.

4. If angels rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, they are pleased with revivals of true religion, when sinners are awakened, and anxiously inquire, What shall we do to be saved? when they forsake their sins, and turn with full purpose of heart unto the Lord. Men are sometimes displeased with such revivals of religion. But angels rejoice in them with exceeding great joy.

5. If angels rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, they are pleased with the translation of the Scriptures, and the spread of the Gospel among the heathen; because these are the means which God has appointed to bring sinners to repentance, and thus prepare them for the everlasting joys of heaven. May the time soon come, when the Bible shall be translated into every tongue, the Gospel be preached to every creature, and the whole earth filled with the glory of God, as the waters fill the seas.

6. If angels rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, then the case of every sinner who has not repented is exceedingly dreadful. Except he repent, he must perish.

Reader, hast thou repented? Examine thy heart and thy life. Hast thou repented? If thou hast not, thou must do it quickly, or for ever perish. And canst thou dwell with devouring fire, canst thou inherit everlasting burnings? Thy heart cannot endure, thy hands cannot be strong. Pain is hard to be borne even here, for a single year, and, if intense, for a single day; what, then, will it be to bear eternal pain? There is something dreadful in dying only the death of the body, for half an hour. That dismal groan which is heard from a death-bed, tells of something that none but dying persons know. What must it be to die the death of the soul, and to continue to die for ever and for ever? To this death, if thou hast not repented, thou art every moment exposed. Nothing but the brittle thread of life keeps thee from the world of woe. And what thou doest to escape this destruction, thou must do quickly. Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thy iniquities by turning unto the Lord, and there shall be joy in heaven even over thee. God will be thy portion, and thou shalt not want any good thing. He will guide thee by his counsel, and afterwards receive thee to glory.

THE

WAY TO BE SAVED.

He called for a light, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED? Acts, 16: 29, 30.

To be saved, is to be delivered from a course of eternal sinning, and eternal suffering. It is to be changed into the perfect image of God, and raised to a state of eternal holiness and bliss in heaven.

To be saved, then, is a great thing, and to know the way to be saved is of great importance. The soul is immortal. It must exist somewhere, for ever. Were there only a possibility that it might exist for ever in hell, it would be important to know the way to be saved, and to take that way. No person can feel that he is to exist for ever, and yet view it as unimportant whether he is to exist in heaven or in hell. The contrast is too great, the interest involved too momentous, and the duration too long, to be viewed without deep emotion by

any man who feels exposed to the one, or desires to obtain the other. Sin is that abominable thing which God hates. It thrust the angels out of heaven, and bound them in chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day. It shut the gates of paradise against the parents of our race, and opened upon a world darkness and wo. What must it be to spend eternity in sinning and enduring all its consequences without mitigation and without end!

Pain is hard to be borne, for a single year; and if intense, for a single day. The stoutest heart will droop under it, and wither like the flower cut down by the mower. What must it be to bear eternal pain raised to the highest pitch of endurance, admitting of no alleviation, and no possibility or even hope of an end! You cannot conceive of the anguish of intense suffering here, unless you feel it. You stand and see the writhings of a sufferer, or you hear his dismal groans, and imagine that you understand his anguish. But how amazing the difference when that anguish comes on you! It has a reality, and it has an intensity, which you before never thought of, and against which you cannot stand.

There is something dreadful in dying, even the death of the body, only for a single hour. That deep hollow groan which echoes from a death-bed, tells of pangs unutterable. What is it, then, to die the death of the soul—in anguish which mortal eye never witnessed, and in horrors which mortal heart never conceived! Oh, that is "destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power." Add to this, *eternity*, and the cup of wretchedness overflows.

To this eternity of unmingled wretchedness every impenitent sinner is now exposed. Nothing but the brittle thread of life, which may be sundered at any moment, keeps him from the world of wo.

"This," says one, "is true. I have long, in some degree, felt it, and I have had no rest. I am a great sinner.

I have sinned against great light and great love. I have sinned a long time. My heart is very hard, and I sometimes think that for me there is no hope. I fear I have sinned away my day of grace. I deserve to perish; and unless God have mercy, I must perish. I know that Jesus Christ died, the just for the unjust; that 'he was wounded for our transgressions,' and 'bruised for our iniquities;' that 'he bore our sins in his own body on the tree;' and that 'the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.' I know this, because God has declared it, and I believe what he says. I know also, because he has declared it, that the wicked will go away into eternal punishment. I feel that I am wicked, exceedingly wicked, and should I for ever perish, I know that it would be just. But I cannot dwell with devouring fire, I cannot inhabit everlasting burnings! I wish to escape, and I know that if I do, it must be quickly. What must I do? When the jailer asked Paul this question, he said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.' And Jesus Christ himself said, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.' But *what is it to believe?* Can you tell me?"

I can. It is to place such confidence in Christ as to feel that what he has said is true; and to *treat it as true.* It is that confidence in him which will lead you to *act* as if what he has said is true. This confidence you ought to repose in him. He is altogether worthy of it. And you ought to do it without any delay. So long as you feel and act as if what he said is not true, you treat him as if he were a liar; and thus greatly aggravate your guilt.

"I know this," you say. "I hope I do feel that what he says is true; that not one jot or tittle of it will fail. I wish to treat it as true. And what shall I do? I wish you to tell me; and to tell me all that I must do to inherit eternal life."

By the grace of God, I will. And may the Holy Spirit enable you to understand, and to *do* it, that your soul may live.

It is plain, that, would you be saved, you must do all that is *essential* to salvation, except what you have already done. I ask you, therefore, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? Have you broken off the practice of all known outward transgressions? Is there no such sin, in which you continue to live? If there is, and you *continue* in it, you will certainly perish. God has opened no way in which any man who continues, knowingly, to indulge in outward transgressions, can ever be saved. You must break off all these, or you must perish.

Do you say, "I have broken off the practice of all known outward sins?"

Have you broken off also the practice of *secret* sins? Is there no transgression known to you, and to God, in which you continue habitually to indulge? Are there no feelings that you habitually cherish, which you know to be offensive to God? If there are, and you continue in this course, you must perish. Do what you will, so long as you continue to "regard iniquity," even in your heart, God will not hear you. You will not advance toward heaven, but constantly toward hell; and will ripen to be an outcast from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power.

Do you say, "So far as I understand my own heart, I have broken off the indulgence of whatever I know to be sin, both secret and open. It appears to me that I loathe it, and wish to be perfectly free from it?"

Have you also begun the practice of all *known duties?* Is there no duty which you feel that you ought to perform, which you continue knowingly and habitually to neglect? If there is, and you continue in such neglect, you will be lost. The neglect of known duty is sin. And should you keep the whole law, except in one thing, and yet continue knowingly, habitually and perseveringly to neglect that, you would perish.

Are you in the stated, habitual practice of secret prayer? Do you daily withdraw from the world, and ask God,

in spirit and in truth, for Christ's sake, to teach you what you must do to be saved? If not, how can you expect ever to know? You come to me, who am only an instrument in his hand, and ask me what you must do; but if you do not go to God and ask him, you break his command; you dishonor him; and, continuing this course, have no reason to expect his blessing.

Do you say, "I am in the habit of daily secret prayer? I do go to God, and ask him, for the sake of Jesus Christ, to teach me what I must do?"

Do you also daily listen to his voice, that you may obtain his answer? Do you go to the Bible daily, feeling that it is the voice of God speaking to you; and for the purpose of learning his will, that you may do it? And when you know what he declares, do you heartily believe it; and because he declares it? And when you know what he commands, do you engage, without delay, in performing it, for the purpose of glorifying God and doing good? Is there no command of God, which you feel to be binding on you, or which you *would* feel to be binding on you, if you daily read the Bible and heartily believed it, which you are not *attempting* to obey? If there is, and you continue this course, not even *attempting* to do the known will of God, or to have respect to all his commandments, you will certainly perish. Faith you may have, but it is not that which overcomes the world. Hope you may have, but it is not that which purifies you as God is pure. And it will not, in the day of trial, be an anchor, sure or steadfast; but it will be as a dream, when one awaketh.

Do you say, "I see my error, and stand condemned; there are commands of God, which I know to be binding on me, that I have not yet attempted to obey?"

No wonder, then, that you are in darkness, and the shadow of death. He that knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, continuing his neglect, will be beaten with many stripes. The neglect of known duty is sin,

as really as the commission of known crime. And if it be allowed, habitual and continued, will as certainly destroy the soul.

"I see my difficulty," you say, "though I daily pray, or attempt it, and daily read the Bible; though I think I believe what I find there, and expect to see its fulfilment. I must acknowledge, and I know that the fault is all in me, there are some duties which I have not attempted to perform."

Is there not another fault? In those that you have attempted, have you not regarded yourself, in doing them, more than God?

"I fear I have."

And is there not also another? Have you not trusted for what you need in order to perform duty, and to be accepted in it, rather to yourself than to Jesus Christ?

Do you say, "It may be so;" and ask, "Is there in my case no hope?"

I answer, This will depend upon what you are willing to do.

WHAT, THEN, ARE YOU WILLING TO DO? Are you willing to surrender yourself, and all that you have, to Jesus Christ, trusting in him for whatever you need; and committing yourself and all that you have to his guidance and disposal? For the sake of glorifying God, promoting your own salvation, and the salvation of your fellow-men, are you willing to make the service of the Lord Jesus Christ the great business of life; and that to which all other things, which come into competition, shall give way? Are you willing henceforward to be governed, in your feelings and actions, by the will of God; daily to go to him, by humble and believing supplication, in the precious name of Christ, and ask him to teach you; and daily, with a childlike, docile spirit, search the Scriptures, that you may ascertain his *whole will*? And when you know his will, are you willing henceforward to *do* it. For the sake of glorifying God, and doing good, are

you willing, whatever it may cost you, and whatever may be the consequences, when you know his will, to do it? Are you willing to *attempt* it? Do you say, can you say, in the presence of Jehovah, "So far as I know the feelings of my heart, I am willing?"

When, I ask, ARE YOU WILLING TO BEGIN? Fix your mind on this point. When are you willing to begin to make it your grand object to do the whole known will of God? Are you willing to begin *now*? If you are not willing to begin now, you are not willing to begin at all. If you think that you are, you are deceived by looking at things at a distance; just as a dishonest man is deceived, who thinks that he is willing to be honest at some future time, but is not willing to be honest now; and just as an intemperate man is deceived, who thinks that he is willing to be temperate at some future time, but is not willing to be temperate now. You are not willing ever to begin to do the whole will of God, if you are not willing to begin now.

Are you then willing to begin now? Can you say, in spirit and in truth, "So far as I know my own heart, I am willing to begin now?"

How LONG ARE YOU WILLING TO CONTINUE? Can you say, "By the help of God, trusting in his grace in Jesus Christ to enable me, I am willing to continue even to the end?"

If so, there is, in your case, *hope*. You may be saved. I will tell you how. *By manifesting this willingness in actions.*

Give, without delay, yourself and all that you have to Jesus Christ, resolving, in his strength, that, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, you will "live not unto yourself, but unto him that died for you, and rose again." Break off, without delay, whatever you know to be sin, because it is offensive to God, and ruinous to you. Engage in whatever you know to be duty, for the sake of glorifying God, and doing good. For the sake of be-

coming like him, let it be henceforward your grand object to learn his whole will, and to do it; *trusting wholly in Jesus Christ* for whatever you need, both to do this, and to be accepted in it. Continue this course to the end of life, and you shall be saved with an everlasting salvation. God will be your portion, and you shall not want any good thing. He will guide you by his counsel, and afterward receive you to glory. You shall see him as he is, and be like him, to everlasting ages. I will tell you why.

This breaking off of all known sin, because it is offensive to God, and ruinous to you, is *repentance.* This engaging heartily in what you know to be duty, for the sake of glorifying God, and doing good, is *obedience.* And surrendering yourself, and all that you have, to Jesus Christ, trusting alone in him for whatever you need, is *faith;* that faith which has subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, and obtained promises; stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness been made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and will, wherever it is exercised, overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, and come off conqueror, and more than conqueror, through him that loved us, and gave himself for us.

Trust then in Jesus Christ alone for whatever you need, and go forward, without delay and without ceasing, in the path of known duty, for the sake of glorifying God and doing good. And God himself declares that you shall not want any good thing.

"But may I," you say, "May I, who am so polluted, and so guilty, trust in Christ; and for his sake receive freely whatever I need?"

I answer, YOU MAY. And it is your indispensable duty now to do it. And then, "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. "The blood

of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." And "he that cometh to Christ, however guilty, will in no wise be cast out." This is his own declaration, and you are bound by every thing dear in heaven, and every thing dreadful in hell, now to treat it as true. Cast then all upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and make it henceforward your grand object to learn the whole will of God, and to do it, for the purpose of glorifying him and doing good. Let nothing hinder you from beginning to-day, and continuing through every future day of your life. And when absent from the body, you shall, through boundless grace, be present with the Lord; and shall mingle with ten thousand in that everlasting anthem, Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

In view of the foregoing directions, which will lead to heaven all who follow them, I remark,

1. That we see one reason why no more persons, under the light of the Gospel, feel their need of Jesus Christ. They do not make *the business of serving him their grand concern.* They do not daily go to God and ask him to teach them; nor do they daily listen to his voice speaking to them in his word, that they may learn his will for the purpose of doing it. If they did, and would attempt, in spirit and in truth, to break off every known sin, and engage in every known duty, for the purpose of glorifying God and doing good, they would feel their need of Jesus Christ. In view of that law which justly requires them to be, at all times, holy as God is holy, and perfect as God is perfect, would they make it their highest object to obey it, they would feel their need of Christ; that in his atoning blood, his perfect righteousness, and his effectual intercession, must be all their hope.

2. We see a reason why so many who, under the light of the Gospel, are convinced of sin, are not savingly

converted; but after being awakened, return again to stupidity, and die in impenitence. It is because they continue to indulge in what they *know to be sin*, and to neglect what they *know to be duty*. They do not even make it their chief object in every thing to do the known will of God. They do not even *attempt* it for the purpose of glorifying him and doing good. But knowing his will, they neglect it; and they continue to neglect it. This hardens the heart, blinds the mind, grieves away the Holy Spirit, prevents their conversion, and fixes them in everlasting impenitence and unbelief. Hence we see,

3. That when a person knows the will of God, not even the want of good motives is the least excuse for his continuing, a single day, in any thing to neglect it. Because his motives in neglecting, and thus disobeying the known will of God, are always bad. And as long as he continues to disobey, his motives will continue to be bad. And continuing to disobey a little longer, till death comes, he will cut off the possibility of a change in his motives, and thus render their badness eternal.

Suppose he who had continued idle till the eleventh hour, and was thus in an almost hopeless condition, when the Lord said, Go thou into the vineyard, had said, "If I knew that my motives would be right in doing it, I would;" and had remained idle, in opposition to the known direction of the Lord, until the day of working was past, would he not most justly have failed of receiving the reward, and been punished as a wicked and slothful servant?

Suppose he to whom his Lord said, Thou *oughtest* to have put my money into the bank, and then at my coming I might have received mine own with interest, had said, "I could not do it; or if I had done it, my motives would have been wrong;" and offered this as an excuse for his neglect; would it at all have lessened the

emphasis of that deserved and tremendous sentence, Take from him the pound; and cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth? Why is he overwhelmed with this tremendous perdition? Because, when he knew his Lord's command, Occupy till I come, he did not do it. He sought for excuses, and disobeyed a known command. He did not do what he ought to have done, for the purpose of honoring his Lord, and setting a good example before his fellow-servants. He did not even attempt it. And the guilt of this, instead of taking it entirely to himself, he attempted to cast on his Lord. But no part of it belonged there. It all belonged to himself; and he will have to bear it, and its consequences, for ever. When God commands any individual, that individual ought, without delay, to make it his grand object in all things habitually and perseveringly to obey, for the purpose of honoring him and doing good. No one has, or can have, the least excuse for continuing knowingly, habitually, and perseveringly to disobey God. And if he does, he will cut off himself from all hope, and sink down under the accumulated guilt of an eternal self-destroyer. For,

4. A way is opened, at a great expense, even of the precious blood of the Son of God. Salvation is procured and freely offered to all, without money and without price. All things are ready. Even the chief of sinners is invited, nay, commanded and urged to come and partake. The Spirit and the bride say, Come; he that hears, says, Come; and whosoever will, may come and partake of eternal life freely. But,

5. In order for this, men have something to do. They must have so much confidence in Christ as to feel that what he says is true, and as to lead them to treat it as true. They must break off what they know to be sin, though dear to them as a right hand, or precious as a

right eye. They must engage, whatever it may cost them, and whatever may be the consequences, in doing whatever they know to be duty, for the purpose of honoring God and doing good. And they must trust, for whatever they need to do this, and to be accepted in it, not in themselves, nor in any creature, but in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let any person on earth undertake, without delay, habitually and perseveringly to do this, and he will find that he has enough to do, and enough to last him as long as he lives. It is a most reasonable service that each one should do this. And if any one, when pressed with the known commands of God, says that he has nothing to do, depend upon it he wishes to do nothing. And, continuing to the end of life to do nothing for God, whatever may be the reason, when he knows what God commands, he will sink down to hell with the whole guilt of endless destruction upon his own head.

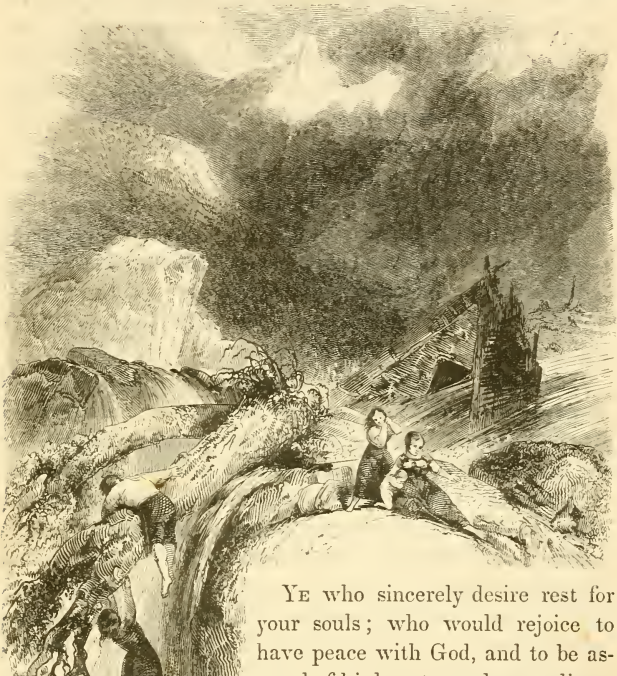
And this destruction will be rendered unspeakably more dreadful, by his having, all his life, refused to walk in a way which, at an infinite expense, God had opened, which was plainly pointed out to him, and in which he was entreated and commanded to go; and which, had he taken, and continued therein, would have led him to glory. As he looks upward, and sees what he might have been; looks downward, and sees what he must be; as he casts a last lingering look upon the brightness of celestial glory, and the songs of the redeemed die away on his ear, as he sinks downward deeper and deeper into blackness of darkness, his cup of wretchedness will be full, and will overflow for ever.

Spirit of all grace, cause the reader to feel the guilt and danger of continuing in any sin; and, without delay, to turn unto God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

THE

SWISS PEASANT.*

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL OF REV. CÆSAR MALAN, OF GENEVA.



Ye who sincerely desire rest for your souls; who would rejoice to have peace with God, and to be assured of his love towards you; listen to a simple narrative of scenes which I have witnessed.

* An account of the overwhelming calamity which visited the valley of Bagnes, in the canton of Valais, in Switzerland, is contained in the Paris "Moniteur," of the 28th June and 2d July, 1818. On the 16th June, in the space of half an hour, 40 houses, 118 barns, 10 mills, 22 granaries, besides a great number of shepherds' huts, etc., were carried away. Many individuals also perished in this dreadful catastrophe.

Is it possible that a nation can dwell in wickedness, and not fear that Divine justice will overtake it? The concerns of this life proceed in their accustomed course: the farmer pursues his labors, the tradesman is immersed in his traffic, and the man of pleasure follows the vanities in which his soul delights. All, outwardly, appears to go on as usual; the same hopes, the same fears, the same frivolous and criminal pursuits, succeed each other in their accustomed course. Men are regardless of the darkness which covers their mind; they perceive not the enmity of their hearts against God. Surrounded with the blessings of Providence, they deny Him who alone is the author and giver of all they enjoy. But God has seen them. "Destruction shall come upon the workers of iniquity;" yet, "he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Pet. 3 : 9. His chastisements are sent both to punish and to save.

Thus it was with the fertile and romantic valley of *Bagnes;* in that place man had forgotten his Maker, and was asleep in prosperity. Were the dwellers in this valley more wicked than the inhabitants of other valleys in Switzerland? Were these men greater sinners than those who dwelt in other, and neighboring countries, and who survived to be witnesses of their sufferings? "Think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?" said our Lord on a like occasion; "I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke 13 : 4, 5. He is the all-powerful God, and all things are subject to his control. At his word, immense masses of ice fell from the summit of a neighboring mountain; they arrested the course of a rivulet which flowed through the valley, its stream soon swelled into a lake, and an immense body of water was restrained only by a feeble barrier of ice. Its fall was certain and near; devastation and ruin to the valley beneath inevitably must ensue.

In an instant the flood bounded from the heights, and

carrying away in its foaming waves all that opposed its course, traversed the valley as a swift messenger of destruction. Forests were torn up by the roots; fields were laid waste; the houses, with their inhabitants, and their flocks and herds, were all confounded together in the torrent. Many immortal souls were, in an instant, either called to the mansions of eternal bliss, or reserved for the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. *Bagnes* was desolated; its villages and fields no longer exist. Its children are no more. Heavenly Father! have the few who survived acknowledged thy hand in this event—have they returned to thee?

Occupied with these reflections, I wandered over the scene of desolation; and as I paced slowly along, I looked around, and saw an aged woman sitting near: she endeavored to rise; "Oh, bestow your charity," said she.

"Do not rise, poor woman; you appear unhappy."

"Oh," said she, "I know not what will become of me."

In fact, all the outward appearances of misery seemed, as it were, united and present before me. She was tall, and a threadbare garment scarcely covered her form; her feet were bare, and one of them severely wounded; her face was shrivelled by hunger; her eyes hollow and dim; a few white hairs strayed from the tattered cloth which covered her head; and near her, upon the sand left by the torrent, was a bag containing a few scraps and morsels of bread.

"Have you no family?" said I; "are you quite alone, and without any help?"

"My last surviving son died twenty years ago, and I lived with my grandson near the village of *Morgne;* but I have never seen my poor grandchild since the day when the wrath of heaven fell upon us: he never appeared again: he was carried away with his dwelling. His wife and children are now living nine miles from hence, among the mountains; they could hardly find enough for themselves, so I

staid in this place. I want but little, and have but a short time to remain here."

"But a short time!" said I to myself, "where will she go when called hence?" and turning to her, I added, "You then think you have not long to live?"

"Yes," said she, looking steadily at me, "the days of my pilgrimage are nearly ended, and I feel that soon, very soon, I must appear before God." She groaned deeply as she uttered these last words.

"Well, poor woman, I hope your soul is prepared to meet your God."

"No, sir, I fear it is not; and this troubles me, and takes away all my comfort."

"Do you desire to be saved? Would you escape from the wrath to come; from the just judgment of God?"

"O yes," she replied, "I *do desire* to be saved; and covering her face with her hands, she exclaimed with earnestness, "O that I might go to heaven! but I know not how."

"Have you long thought about these things?"

"One evening, about two years ago, a stranger stopped at our cabin, and remained there all night. He spoke much of God and of heaven; and read to us about the evil of sin, and our need of a Saviour, from a book which he had with him; and several times he spoke to me particularly. During the night, I heard him praying for all of us, and especially for the aged woman, who, he said, must soon appear before God. He left us at break of day; I think I still hear his parting words; he took my hand, and said, 'My poor friend, the hour of your death is near; I shall not see you again in this world. Oh, do not forget the Saviour. Seek him, seek him earnestly, *while* he may be found.' Since that day, I have had no rest; his words are fixed deep in my heart. I feel that I am a sinner; I have done all I could, but I am still under condemnation."

"What sort of a life have you lived?"

"I have not been worse than my neighbors, but God is holy, and looks at the heart. I am too great a sinner to go to heaven, and I know not what to do."

"Blessed are they that mourn," said our gracious Saviour, "for they shall be comforted." Matt. 5 : 4. This precious promise came strongly to my mind while the poor woman related her history. I seemed to hear the Saviour himself calling this poor wandering sheep, and drawing her to him; and I fervently implored, that He who opened the heart of Lydia would open the heart of this poor woman; then looking earnestly at her, I said,

"I can tell you what you ought to do—how you may be delivered from the burden of your sins, and assured of admission to heaven."

"Oh, sir," she exclaimed, stretching her trembling, withered hands towards me, "Oh, sir, pity me! pity my gray hairs; the grave is ready to receive me."

"No, my poor friend, not before Jesus has spoken peace to your soul. Listen to me. Did not the stranger tell you that Christ Jesus, the Son of God, came down from heaven to save sinners?"

"Yes, he said many things about him, but I do not remember them all; I only recollect that he told us there was no Saviour except the Son of God, and that if a sinner did not find rest in Christ, there was no hope for him."

"Well, my friend, do you believe this, or do you think that man is able to save himself, and to blot out his sins by his own good works?"

"Once I thought so. Before I heard this stranger, I thought I was good enough to please God, and that my good deeds would do away my offences. But now I see plainly that I am a great sinner, and that I cannot myself procure the pardon of my sins, or do away the evil I have committed."

"Are you sure of this? Have you tried to deliver yourself from the guilt of sin?"

"I have done all that any mortal can do. As soon as my eyes were opened to see my sinful state, and that I was under the curse of God's holy law, I was terrified, and I determined to do what would please him. From that day I have given up my pleasures and my former pursuits. I have willingly undergone all sorts of privations and sufferings. I have been constant in attending public worship, and regular in my private devotions; but all, all is useless. They tell me, indeed, that I am sure to go to heaven; and they call me a saint; but I have it here—I have upon my heart and conscience a burden intolerable—a horrible dread which overwhelms me. Oh, deliver me from this; take it —take it away from me, if you are able."

"Christ alone is able to deliver you; he is able, and he is willing; he came into the world to save sinners, 1 Tim. 1 : 15; to give rest to all who are weary and heavy laden. Go to him, and you shall find rest for your soul." See Matt. 11 : 28–30.

"But will he, can he receive such a vile creature as I am? Often would I have gone to the Saviour, but I felt I was too unworthy. Yesterday I recollected what the stranger told us of the prodigal son, and I wept while I thought on his happiness. Ah, said I, how happy must he have been in his father's arms!"

"And do you think that the everlasting arms are less ready to receive you than the prodigal son?"

"To receive me! Ah, I am not worthy."

"And was the prodigal worthy? When a free pardon is offered, there is no question about what we deserve."

The poor woman looked at me, anxious to understand my meaning, but she could not.

It is, indeed, hard for the heart of man to think that it is possible to be loved of God! Speak to the vilest of sinners of the necessity of obtaining pardon for his sins; and if he is convinced of this, he will readily undergo the most severe sufferings, and make the greatest sacrifices. But

tell him of free pardon; tell him that his Creator, that God himself has become his Saviour, and is ready to bestow upon him life everlasting; he will not believe you—he is not willing to accept pardon on these terms. He cannot receive the free mercy of God, or rather he rejects it, because his proud heart would obtain salvation as a reward of his own works; he would receive it as a recompense, not as a free gift.

Here was the mistake of this poor woman. Apparently taught that man could work out his own salvation by his own strength, she had persisted in this fatal error, and had not the remotest idea that she was wrong. I saw the cloud which darkened her understanding, and endeavored to remove it.

"You have not, then," said I, "yet learned why our Lord Jesus Christ came upon earth."

"To save sinners," said she.

"But you do not perceive how he has done this; you know not that he has died, 'the just for the unjust;' that he became a ransom for sinners. He saw them yet afar off, lost and helpless in their sins, when, moved by an all-powerful love, which passeth man's understanding, he took upon himself their iniquity, and bore their sins in his own body on the tree. He has borne the burden from which he delivered them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Gal. 3 : 13.

"Happy are those whom he has redeemed!"

"Yes, they are truly happy; and I trust you will find this happiness. If you believe in Christ, you will share in his favor and his love."

"What, is it possible that the Saviour can love *me*, and receive and pardon *me?*"

"Why not *you*, when he says, 'Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely?' When you have believed in him, you will find that he has loved you with an everlasting love. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man

lay down his life for his friends.' John 15 : 13. And did not he lay down his life for you ; yes, even for you, when he died on the cross ? Do not you believe this ?"

"Is it possible ? Did he die for me ? For my sins ; for mine ?"

"Why was he smitten of God and afflicted, Isa. 53 : 4, if not for poor sinners such as you and I ? Who can need more than we do, that a Saviour should interpose between us and the justice of the Most High ? And since it is written, that Christ came to seek and to save that which is lost, Luke 19 : 10, since he died for the chief of sinners, 1 Tim. 1 : 15, was it not for me, was it not for you, lost and ruined by nature and practice, that he laid down his life upon the cross ?"

O blessed Gospel of Christ, the message of peace and life eternal, who can understand and declare thy power ! What words can describe the emotions which passed over the countenance of this poor sinner, weary and heavy laden with the burden of her sins, and beginning to hope for pardon and deliverance !

Language cannot express the joy which this poor soul felt, when touched by the power of God. The day of her salvation was come. She thought of her sins, and was troubled ; but she mourned, and was in bitterness. She thought of her enmity to God ; but she could be his enemy no longer. She thought of the spirituality of his law ; but she delighted in the law of God after the inward man. She thought she could forsake all, and follow Christ, and submit herself to his authority and grace. Her eyes were opened ; her heart, for the first time, tasted the love of Christ ; the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, now taught her to call Jesus the Lord.

"Then may I believe that Christ died for me ?" said she, still appearing fearful to think so.

"Do you doubt this ? Do you desire to refuse the benefits of our Redeemer's sacrifice ?"

"Oh no; the happiness of believing in him is too great to be rejected."

She was silent some minutes. Engaged in reflection upon these truths, she appeared deeply moved. At length she clasped her hands, and bursting into tears, exclaimed, "Then I am saved! the Saviour died for my sins, though I knew it not. O blessed news! this indeed *is* consolation!"

She then leaned forward, and rested her head upon her hands. Tears trickled down her arms, and fell upon her garments as she uttered the words, "Heavenly Father, Jesus, Saviour," mingled with her sobs. At length raising herself, she said, "Then Christ has become my ransom. O my God," she added, raising her eyes towards heaven, "thou hast had compassion upon me, aged and wretched as I am. Thou hast not suffered me to go down to the grave ignorant of thy love and pardoning mercy. O what love, what exceeding love!"

"His love is indeed great, 'in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Rom. 5 : 8. Ought we not then to love him?"

"Yes, I love him, and will strive to serve him. Ah, sir, if you could but see what passes within me; I seem as just awakened from sleep, and as if I was delivered from a mountain which weighed down my soul. This, then, was what the stranger meant, when he told me I must be 'born again.' Let me go," added she, rising, "let me go and declare these things to my granddaughter and her children. Would that my poor son had known them before he died."

"My mother," said I, "leave your son in the hands of the Most High, and haste and tell your grandchildren what a Saviour you have found. Go and declare it abroad during the short time you have to remain here, before you go hence to Him who has loved you with such exceeding love. Declare that you were a sinner, that you sought to obtain salvation by your own strength; but that your only dependence is now on your Saviour Christ; now you believe in

him, and are persuaded, from his own words, that he was sacrificed for you; and that his blood, shed for the sins of many, has washed away your stains. Go, my poor friend, and, during the short interval which yet separates you from your God, consecrate yourself to his service; offer to him what he has given to you, a new heart, a heart now filled with joy and consolation, even as he has imparted it to you this very day."

"May it be so," said she; "may God be pleased to direct me: I am but a poor peasant, ignorant of every thing; but he will instruct me."

"And it is by this book he will teach you," replied I, giving her a New Testament; "this is the book the stranger read; it contains all that I have this day told you of Jesus, and his love for us. It contains the declaration of the eternal and unchangeable love of God. All that your soul can desire, or your heart can wish, are here. Yes, all knowledge and understanding; all truth, life, and peace; and happiness both for this world and that which is to come; all is declared in this blessed book; and may God, whose eye now beholds us, himself teach you to understand it."

She took the book, without replying; kissed it, and pressed it to her heart. I took her by the hand; and after a few moments turned away, thinking I should see her no more in this world.

She called after me, "Shall we not meet again in heaven?" "Yes," said I, "I trust both you and I are tending thitherward."

She then shall be saved at the last day, thought I. O heavenly Father, may thy holy name be glorified in these mountains! Blessed Saviour, may thy all-powerful voice be heard calling thy children unto thee. Be pleased thyself to lead this solitary sheep. Thou hast revealed thyself to her; be ever present with her, strengthening her soul. O make her path straight, and cause her to walk steadily therein.

She shall go therein, the Christian will say, in whose heart Christ is formed the hope of glory; being satisfied that it is when we are united to him that we truly love and serve him. She is a child of his kingdom, and shall walk in the path of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The righteousness of Christ, the precious blood he shed upon the cross, have made her free, and she is no longer under condemnation. Christ has suffered for her; she has believed, and has this witness in herself. See 1 John, 5: 10. The burden which oppressed her is taken away, and instead of sorrowfully crying, "Who shall deliver me from mine affliction?" she has learned to ascribe praises to the Lamb of God, who has washed her from her sins in his own blood. See Rev. 1 : 5.

The love of God brought these things to pass, and in his love she will dwell, living unto him who hath redeemed her. Let the unbeliever or the scoffer of our day assert that it is dangerous thus to declare a free salvation to sinners. Let them say that it is buoying up with false hopes; and that to announce pardon "without money and without price," telling them that faith alone can justify, is to invite to licentiousness, and will only wrap them up in carnal security. Mistaken indeed! They are ignorant that the knowledge of Christ is life everlasting; that he will abide with the heart that openeth unto him, Rev. 3 : 20; and that the soul which has tasted that the Lord is gracious, which has contemplated Christ dying upon the cross, the just for the unjust, cannot live unto sin, seeing that sin crucified the Lord of glory. They know not that the desire of the believer is to live according to the will of Christ.

Had they, like me, seen this poor woman brought to the knowledge of the Saviour and his love; had they seen her countenance, worn with care and anxiety, at once enlightened by that peace and hope which the Saviour alone can give; had they heard the voice with which she bade me farewell as to this world; they could not, if open to

conviction, assert that these things are dangerous to the souls of men.

As for myself, I trust that this poor woman was led by the teaching of the Holy Spirit to believe in him who justifies the ungodly. See Rom. 4 : 5. If she was enabled truly to believe in Christ crucified, she has been, by this faith, put into possession, through hope of the world that is to come, of an eternal inheritance.

And if you, my reader, sincerely desire to partake of this salvation, you have no cause to despair of pardon. This poor woman believed in Christ, and was delivered from her fears. Do you also give your heart to Jesus Christ; repent of and forsake your sins ; submit yourself unto God ; and he will impart to you his righteousness, and THAT PEACE WHICH THE WORLD CANNOT GIVE.

THE STORM HUSHED.

'Tis past—the dreadful stormy night
Is gone, with all its fears!
And now I see returning light,
The Lord, my Sun, appears.

Oh, wondrous change! but just before,
Despair beset me round;
I heard the lion's horrid roar,
And trembled at the sound.

Before corruption, guilt, and fear,
My former comforts fell;
And I discover'd, standing near,
The dreadful depths of hell.

But Jesus pitied my distress,
He heard my feeble cry,
Reveal'd his blood and righteousness,
And brought salvation nigh.

Dear Lord, since thou hast broke my bands
And set the captive free,
I would devote my tongue, my hands,
My heart, my all to thee.

Newton.

No. 181.

DURATION

OF

FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

BY REV. TIMOTHY DWIGHT, D. D.

"And these," said our Lord, Matt. 25 : 46, "shall go away into everlasting punishment." Christians have very generally regarded this declaration of Christ as intending, in the strict sense, a punishment without end. But there have been multitudes of persons styling themselves Christians, particularly in modern times, who have decided otherwise; and insisted, either that there will be no punishment beyond the grave, or that it will be temporary. In support of this opinion, and in opposition to that which has been generally received, they have advanced various arguments and objections, which they professedly consider as having great weight, and to which apparently they yield their own assent. It is proper, therefore, to examine this subject, to meet such objections and arguments, and either to refute them, or acknowledge that they cannot be answered.

As the abettors of this scheme blend their objections and their direct arguments together, and as they are too numerous to be examined, in every instance, separately in a single Tract, I shall not feel myself obliged to discriminate very solicitously in this respect; but shall take the liberty to follow, in some measure, the path which my opposers have trodden.

Before I begin the investigation of this subject, I shall make a few observations, for the purpose of removing, or, if that cannot be done, of lessening a prejudice—the strongest, perhaps, cherished by the human mind—against the doctrine in question. The subject is immeasurably awful, and beyond all others affecting. Few persons can behold it in near vision with a steady eye. The very preacher who teaches the doctrine to others, cannot but know, unless certainly assured of his own salvation—a case undoubtedly very rare—that he may at that very time be alleging arguments which are to affect *himself*, and to evince his own final destruction, as well as that of others. If his heart is not made of stone, he cannot contemplate the subject as it respects his *fellow-men*, without overwhelming amazement. The destiny of one immortal mind is an object whose importance no finite thought can conceive, no numbers estimate. How vast must be this object, when the number of such minds becomes so great as to reach the lowest limit to which the most enlarged charity will be compelled to extend it! How entirely overwhelmed must he be who contemplates it, when he remembers, and beholds a melancholy experience verify, the declaration of our Saviour, that "wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat!"

At the same time the subject is unquestionably *perplexing*, as well as *distressing*. There are, I know, persons who speak concerning it with an air of cool self-complacency, as being, in their view, easy of investigation, and free from embarrassment. I am inclined, perhaps uncharitably, to give them little credit for candor, clearness of intellect, or soundness of character, and greatly doubt whether the doctrine has been investigated by them, either to such an

extent, or with such a spirit, as might furnish them with just views of its nature. There are others who discourse of it in the desk, in the phraseology, the style, and the utterance belonging to vehement eloquence; such as we often find attached to a strain of powerful invective, or vigorous controversy. Something may here be allowed for the strong impulses of ardent minds; something to the influence, unhappy as it may be deemed, of controversial feelings; and something to mistaken apprehensions of duty. In this manner we may in some measure excuse, but cannot justify this unfortunate conduct. Were such persons to remember that they may at this very time be pronouncing the final doom of their own parents, brothers, sisters, wives, children, and even of themselves, I cannot but believe that their mode of address would be essentially changed, would lose all its violence and exaggeration, and would become deeply humble, solemn, and affectionate. Every preacher ought to remember, that the latter of these modes of addressing a congregation on this subject is incomparably better fitted to produce the best effects on those who hear him; while the former will usually terminate in awakening mere horror concerning the subject, and mere disgust at the preacher.

But painful and perplexing as this subject is, it is often exhibited in the word of God. Whatever doctrines he has declared concerning it are true, and unfold with absolute certainty a part of the future destiny of man. They cannot, therefore, fail of being supremely interesting to *us*. To know and to feel their proper import, may be the very means of turning our feet into the path of life. To disbelieve them, or to be ignorant of them, can, on the other hand, be of no possible use to us, and may easily prove

fatally injurious. Were there no escape from this dreadful allotment published to us during our probation, we might, indeed, as well remain in ignorance of the evils to which we were advancing. But, as a knowledge of our danger may prove the most effectual means of our escape, the importance of gaining this knowledge cannot be measured.

The punishment of the wicked is, as is well known to the reader, often asserted in the Scriptures to be "everlasting," to endure "for ever," and "for ever and ever." The objectors whom I have mentioned insist that all the words and phrases of this nature denote a limited duration, and are never used to signify an absolute eternity. The meaning of all language is to be learned only from those who use it. If the manner in which they understand it is clearly discoverable from their writings, we may by critical attention become possessed of its meaning; if not, we are left without a remedy. Let us, therefore, in the present case, have recourse to the writers of the New Testament, the only persons from whom we can expect to derive explicit views concerning the subject in hand, that we may, if possible, determine this point in a satisfactory manner. It is to be observed, then,

1. *That the words and phrases which have been either mentioned or alluded to, appear to be used in the Scriptures to denote the longest period of which the subject mentioned in each case is capable.*

In one instance the word "for ever" seems to signify merely a long period. "One generation passeth away, and another cometh, but the earth abideth for ever." If the destruction of this world, mentioned in the Scriptures, denotes the annihilation of its atoms, as well as the ruin of its form and structure, then the earth can be said to abide

for ever with a limited meaning only; to wit, that it will endure for a long time, compared with a period of a human generation. But if the elements are to survive this destruction, and become the materials of "the new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell," then the term is used in a literal sense, and denotes an endless duration.

In such other cases as I have observed, this word is employed to denote the *longest period of which the subject united with it is capable.* Thus "a servant for ever," is a servant during the longest period in which he can be a servant; that is, during his life. "An ordinance for ever," is an ordinance continuing through the longest time in which it can be an ordinance; that is, throughout the whole continuance of the dispensation of which it is a part; namely, the Mosaic dispensation.

In the same manner, "the everlasting hills," and "the everlasting mountains," denote hills and mountains enduring throughout the longest possible period which is predicable of them; to wit, while the earth endures.

It will be observed, that I have here mentioned the English words and phrases, and not the corresponding ones of the original languages. The reason of this is, that, so far as I know, the original words are acknowledged on all hands to be correctly translated.

But if these words, when applied to the continuance of things in the future world, are used in this manner, they unquestionably denote an absolute eternity. For, with respect to these things, such a duration will then evidently be possible.

2. *The phrase commonly rendered "for ever and ever," is used, if I mistake not, eighteen times in the New Testament!* In fifteen instances it is applied to the continuance of the

glory, perfections, government, and praise of God. In one, Rev. 22 : 5, it is said of the righteous, in the future world, that "they shall reign for ever and ever." In one of the remaining two, it is said of the impenitent, that is, of those among them who worship the beast and his image, that "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." In the remaining instance, it is said of the devil, who deceived the nations, of the beast, and of the false prophet, that "In the lake of fire and brimstone, they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

Now let me ask, whether a man, even of moderate understanding, could be supposed to write with scrupulous integrity a system of theology, and employ this phrase sixteen times to denote an absolute eternity, and twice to denote that which was infinitely different; while these were the only instances in which the phrase was applied to a given subject, and that of immeasurable importance to those for whom he wrote? But if such a man cannot be supposed thus to use language, nor vindicate it when used in this manner, can such conduct be attributed safely to the Spirit of God?

3. *In Matt.* 25 : 46, "These shall go away into EVERLASTING punishment, but the righteous into life ETERNAL," *the same Greek word is applied to the future happiness of the righteous, and to the future misery of the wicked.*

On this application I have two remarks to make.

The first is, that it is applied to *both* these subjects in exactly the *same* manner; without any mark, or hint of a distinction in the use of the word. Plainly, therefore, we are not warranted to suppose any such distinction, unless we are taught it elsewhere in the Scriptures.

It is to be remarked, farther, that the same word is

generally, and, so far as I have observed, always, applied in the same manner, without any appearance of an intentional distinction.

My second remark is this: that the word is employed in this passage to denote *a duration which commences after what we commonly intend by time is ended.* If, then, a limitation is not found elsewhere, we shall be unwarranted, since it is used here in the absolute manner, to believe that the duration which it expresses will have any limits. The longest duration which will then be possible, the longest which may be predicated of the enjoyments of the righteous and the sufferings of the wicked, will certainly be eternal.

4. *The terms in which the sufferings of the impenitent are spoken of in other passages of Scripture, leave, so far as I can discern, no hope of their termination.*

The following examples will sufficiently illustrate this observation. In the second epistle of St. Peter, it is said of the wicked, "that they will utterly perish in their own corruption." It cannot be denied that the destruction spoken of in this passage is declared to be absolute, and must be either annihilation or eternal woe. But annihilation cannot be that long-continued suffering to which the abettors of the doctrine here opposed acknowledge the wicked to be consigned in Matt. 25 : 46.

In Mark 9 : 43, the immediate means of suffering to the impenitent are styled by our Saviour, "the fire that never shall be quenched."

In several passages of the Scriptures, particularly in Matt. 25 : 46; Dan. 12 : 2; Matt. 3 : 12; Matt. 13 : 36, etc., the happiness of the righteous and the sufferings of the wicked are exhibited to us in what may be called a parallel manner; and yet no intimation is given that the

duration of the one will not be equally extended with that of the other.

In Mark 14 : 21, our Saviour says, "Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed. Good were it for that man if he had never been born." If Judas should be miserable through any limited duration, however long, and should afterwards be happy through the eternity which would lie beyond it, this position must, with mathematical evidence, be seen to be untrue.

In Luke 16 : 25, the rich man is informed by Abraham that "in his lifetime he had received his good things; as Lazarus had likewise received his evil things." Lazarus had received all his evil things. The rich man must clearly, I think, be considered as having received all his good things. Especially will this be evident, when we remember that the declaration is made as a conclusive reason why he could not receive a single drop of water, the only good thing for which he asked.

In Psalm 50, which seems plainly to be an account of the last judgment, we have, in the 22d verse, subjoined to this account, the following awful monition: "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

In Matt. 18 : 23, etc., we have the parable of the servant who owed ten thousand talents, and had nothing to pay. This servant his lord ultimately commanded to be thrown into prison, and there confined until he should pay the debt. How evident is it that this man could never pay the debt, and therefore must for ever remain in prison.

In John 3 : 36, our Saviour says, "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life." I can conceive of no lan-

guage which could more effectually cut off every hope of the impenitent than this.

In Rev. 21 : 27, it is said, "There shall in no wise enter enter into it," that is, into the heavenly city, "any thing that defileth, or that worketh abomination, or that maketh a lie; but they who are written in the Lamb's book of life." According to the declarations of Scripture, all impenitent sinners are defilers. They all work that which is abominable in the sight of God; and in this character, as they have not repented, nor believed in the Redeemer, nor ceased to sin, they will all appear before their Judge; and therefore will "in no wise" be permitted to enter the heavenly city.

To these passages might be added, as every one who reads his Bible knows, a multitude of others declaring the same doctrine in the same unambiguous manner. But if these do not produce conviction, it will, I am afraid, be vainly expected, not only from any which are found in the Scriptures, but from any which language can express.

To all this, however, it is farther objected, that *God cannot justly punish the sins of men, who are finite beings, with an infinite, or endless punishment.* To this it has been often replied, that, although men are finite beings, yet, as their obligation to obedience is great in proportion to the greatness and excellency of God, it is of course infinite. To violate infinite obligation is plainly an infinite evil; and, therefore, a finite being may commit a crime infinitely heinous, and deserving infinite punishment. The same conclusion is also drawn, by much the same course of reasoning, from the tendency of sin to oppose the designs and glory of God and the supreme good of his creation. I shall not, however, insist on these arguments, nor on the

conclusion to which they conduct us; but proceed to other considerations which lie more within our reach.

1. *God may justly punish sin so long as it exists; and it may exist for ever.*

He who sins through this life may evidently sin through another such period, and another, and another, without end. That while we continue to sin God may justly punish us, if he can justly punish us at all, is equally evident. No reason can be given why sin may not be punished at any future time with as much justice and propriety as at the present. That it may be justly punished at the present time, cannot be denied, any more than that it is in fact punished.

2. *The Scriptures teach us, that sinners who die in impenitence will not cease to sin throughout eternity.*

The supposition that their sufferings in the future world will be complete, involves in it as a consequence that they will continue to sin. If they were to become penitent and virtuous, they would of course possess many enjoyments, and those of a very important nature. Our Saviour, speaking to St. John concerning those who in the future world are excluded from heaven, says, Rev. 22 : 15, "Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." It will not be questioned that this is an account of sinners. It cannot be questioned that it is an account of their existing character in the future world.

"Do, therefore," says Solomon, Eccl. 9 : 10, "what thy hand findeth to do with thy might: for there is no work, device, knowledge, nor wisdom, in the world of spirits, whither thou goest." "Wisdom," in the language of Solomon, denotes virtue, or the religion of the heart. "Work"

here intends the work of salvation; the work in which virtue is assumed and increased. There is, then, in that world, no work of salvation, no assumption of virtue. Of course, those who go into that world in the character of sinners, still continue to sin. They may therefore be punished with the same justice as in the present world; and the Scriptures declare, in Matt. 25: 46, and many other passages, that they are punished.

3. *These things are all said and done after the close of the present dispensation; and after the commencement of that dispensation which in the Scriptures is represented as eternal and unchangeable.*

There is no hint given us, either in the Old or New Testaments, that the dispensation which will commence after the judgment will ever change. On the contrary, so far as it is mentioned at all, it is always spoken of as enduring and immutable. In Heb. 12: 26–28, St. Paul says, "Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." From this passage it is evident that the things which are not shaken will remain steadfast and immovable. But, were there nothing explicitly declared concerning this subject, the very silence of the Scriptures forbids a rational belief of any such alteration, since the belief rests on nothing but a mere hypothesis, gratuitously adopted.

It is farther objected, that *the benevolence of God is ir-*

reconcilable with the idea of endless punishment. Were I to undertake to determine, judging merely from the resources of my own mind, what conduct the benevolence of God would prompt him to pursue, I should probably say, that he would never permit either natural or moral evil to exist in the universe. Perfect benevolence, I should without a doubt conclude, would produce nothing but virtue and enjoyment. Very remote, however, from this scheme is the actual state of the world which we inhabit. Sin has here reigned from the beginning; and sorrow, the proper reward of sin, has been multiplied unceasingly throughout every habitable part of the earth. It is certain, therefore, that to permit the existence of sin, and to punish it with suffering, and that suffering often so excruciating as to terminate our present life, are things consistent with the benevolence of God. No reason can be given why he who does these things here, in a state of trial, may not do the same things to a much greater extent, in a state of retribution. When man undertakes to determine what it is proper or improper for his Maker to do in the government of the world, he ought to remember, that "as the heavens are high above the earth, so are his ways above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts."

It is farther said, that *the punishment of the future world is merely disciplinary.* This opinion certainly cannot be founded upon Scriptural testimony. When the Gospel was written, the fallen angels had been suffering punishment at least four thousand years. Yet we find them no less hostile to their Creator, and actuated by no less malice against his intelligent creatures, than at the first. Men of all succeeding ages are by Christ and his apostles warned against their falsehood and seduction, because in every age they

would be false and seductive. At the judgment-day, to which they are "reserved under chains and darkness," they will be consigned to the fire, which was prepared for them. Of course, their punishment will to that time have had no good effect upon their character. The punishment of the future world, therefore, is not exhibited in the Scriptures as disciplinary.

Again, it is objected, that *endless punishment is unnecessary.* This cannot be said with propriety, unless we know the whole state of the divine government, and all the necessities of those who are governed. The wants of the universe are such, as to be supplied by far other means than we should devise. It is impossible for us to determine how great, how numerous, or how useful the consequences may be, which will flow from the punishment of the impenitent. God, speaking by the prophet Isaiah, in a passage which our Saviour applies to the future state of the wicked, says, "They," that is, righteous beings, "shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men who have transgressed against me; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." This abhorrence may, for aught that appears, have a powerful, perhaps an indispensable efficacy to preserve virtuous beings throughout the universe in a course of endless obedience. The measures necessary in a moral government reaching through immensity and eternity, cannot be contrived by such beings as we are.

I know of but one objection more which appears to demand a particular answer. This is derived from the Gospel. Here, in various passages and forms, it is said, that "Christ died for all." The meaning of these declarations I have, on another occasion, explained, and, if I mistake not, sufficiently, when considering *the extent of the*

atonement. I shall, therefore, only observe at present, that with the strictest propriety and truth Christ may be said to have "died for all," if he has made *a sufficient atonement for all;* although some should choose not to accept the proffer of an interest in it, and should therefore never enjoy the blessings which it provides.

To these objections and arguments are customarily added several passages of Scripture, construed by the objectors in such a manner as they judge to be favorable to their own scheme. These have been often shown to be vainly alleged for this purpose; nor are they, so far as I perceive, articles on which the objectors very seriously rely. I shall, therefore, refer those of my readers who wish to see these texts particularly considered, to formal treatises written on the subject, and to respectable commentaries on the Scriptures, and shall conclude this treatise with the following

REMARK:

THAT THE CONSIDERATIONS PRESENTED IN THIS TRACT STRONGLY EXHIBIT THE FOLLY OF HAZARDING THE SOUL UPON THE DOCTRINES OF UNIVERSALISM.

The peculiar evil of the doctrine which I have opposed in this Tract is this: those who embrace it are prone, almost of course, to feel that they are in some good degree safe, while continuing in a state of impenitence and unbelief. The heart relishes sin, and disrelishes reformation. Hence, it devises various modes of quieting its fears concerning the anger of God, and securing itself from future woe. To forsake its iniquities is, according to its own views, to strip itself of all real good; and therefore does

not enter into its plans, nor become any part of its conduct. Still, it cannot bear the thought of being punished for its sins. In this situation it contrives various schemes, by which it hopes on the one hand to enjoy the pleasures of sin, and on the other to escape punishment. For this purpose some persons become atheists, and deny the very existence of God. Others become deists, and deny his word and character. Others, who acknowledge the revelation of the Scriptures, reject the atonement of Christ; and others, the necessity and reality of regeneration by the Spirit of God; merely that they may neither be obliged to confess nor to feel themselves so sinful as to need these things. Some determine that they shall be safe on account of the natural amiableness of their dispositions; some on account of the abundance of their good works, their uprightness towards men, their zealous attendance on the external duties of religion, the fervid state of their imagination and their feelings with respect to religious subjects, or their correct and abundant conversation about religious doctrines. Others still, adopt, for the same purpose, the scheme of Universalism; to something very like which, in substance, all the other schemes which I have mentioned directly tend; whether perceived by those who embrace them, or not perceived. Of those who embrace this scheme, some admit that the impenitent will be punished for a season. Others deny that they will be punished at all. Some hold, that Christ has in the complete sense expiated the sins of all men; while others consider the impenitent as expiating their own sins by sufferings limited in their duration. In all these different schemes, it is obvious that not a single contrivance is adopted to make men virtuous. This, evidently, is no part of their design. On the contrary, every

one is calculated only to foster the love of sinning, and provide safely for the sinner.

But how suspicious is this design in its very nature! Is there, to the eye of common sense, even a remote probability that God will love sin, or prosper sinners? Do the Scriptures furnish a single hint, which, in the remotest manner, even countenances such an opinion? Do they not, on the contrary, hold out the most terrible alarms to every impenitent transgressor? Would it not break the heart of every such transgressor who reads this Tract, if God were audibly to declare to him, "*Thou* shalt go away into everlasting punishment?" Trust not, then, your souls, your eternal safety, to the doctrines of Universalism. Launch not into the ocean of eternity upon this plank. Flee to Christ, the ark in which you will be secured from every danger. Waste not your probation in seeking "refuges of lies," in "making covenants with death, and agreements with hell." Remember that God hath said, "Your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand." Remember, that Christ himself has told you, that "he who believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life;" and that "he who believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

No. 182.

TO

THE INHABITANTS

OF

NEW SETTLEMENTS.

BY REV. ALEXANDER PROUDFIT, D.D.

Brethren, dearly beloved—"Mount Zion," by the believing Israelites, was emphatically pronounced, "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." In the temple, which there stood, were contained "the ark of the covenant; the mercy-seat;" the shekinah, or symbol of the divine presence; and "the oracles of the living God." Thither the faithful among the Jews solemnly repaired at their appointed seasons, and deemed it equally their duty and glory to worship their King "in the gates of the daughter of Zion." The royal Psalmist, when driven into the wilderness by the persecution of Saul, frequently cast a longing look towards the temple of his Father; "his soul thirsted for God, for the living God, that he might see his power and glory, as he had seen him in the sanctuary." He appeared to envy even "the swallow and sparrow," which had access to "the courts of the Lord of hosts," when he was excluded.

But surely the Gospel church, although she may appear externally more simple, is internally and spiritually more glorious. Here we have not the typical "mercy-seat, overlaid with gold," but we have the great antitype, Jesus the Divine Redeemer, through whose person and offices the Eternal God condescends to hold communion with his people, and they are emboldened to approach him with the confidence of children. We have not merely the books of

Moses, and the writings of the prophets—all that were enjoyed by the ancient Jews—but we have the whole canon of divine revelation completed: the New Testament, which sheds light and glory over the Old. We have not barely the paschal lamb, representing Messiah afterwards to appear, and to be offered a sacrifice for sin, but Jesus, "the Lamb of God," as really incarnate, as already crucified, as having actually endured and accomplished all that was typified by Jewish sacrifices, or foretold by Jewish prophets; confirming the covenant by the blood of his cross, and thus sealing over to his ransomed offspring the promises of his Gospel and the inheritance of glory. We have not merely the shekinah, or symbol of the divine presence, overshadowing the mercy-seat, but we have the everlasting Father, spiritually present in the assemblies of his people. There he graciously dwells, enlightening their understandings, elevating their hearts, purifying their affections, and refreshing them with assurances of his love. "He clothes his priests with salvation," accompanying their administrations with the power of his Spirit; and "causes his saints to shout aloud for joy." "On the mountains of Zion," the temple of his grace, he makes the dews of heavenly consolation to descend, supporting the drooping spirits, and "commandeth the blessing, even life for ever more."

This is an imperfect representation of the privileges which attend the ordinances of God, and of those blessings which are often experienced by his children in the sanctuary of his praise.

What, beloved brethren, are your exercises, when you are now exiles from his temple, and deprived of those joys which are there to be expected? Do you occasionally reflect, with sorrow of spirit, on opportunities formerly enjoyed, when you were permitted to attend "the house of God with the voice of joy and praise;" when you sat down, from Sabbath to Sabbath, "under his shadow with great delight," to hear from his servants the message of life,

and to mingle with your brethren in adoring the condescension and grace of the infinitely precious Jesus? Does it afford matter of humiliation and grief, that you are now doomed to spend tedious days and weeks afar off from the courts of your Father, destitute of that Gospel which might prove the power of God to your own comfort, and to the salvation of your beloved offspring? If such are the secret exercises of your hearts, permit me now affectionately to ask,

1. *How did you esteem and improve the ordinances of religion, when they were actually enjoyed?* Was it your care to cultivate the "incorruptible seed" sown in your hearts by the dispensation of the word? Were you often expostulating with the adorable Spirit to water it with his influences, and cause it to produce "the fruits of righteousness to the glory of God the Father?" Or were the tidings of great joy often heard with indifference, and attended merely as your own convenience might dictate? Jehovah is awfully jealous of his institutions, and frequently writes the sin of formal, careless professors in their punishment. Sometimes, in his displeasure, he removes them from the ordinances of his grace, or he removes the ordinances from them, and thus teaches them the worth of their privileges by the want of them. Such judgments were frequently denounced against a spirit of slumber in the Old Testament worshippers, and these judgments are no less threatened against the indolent, unprofitable professor, in every succeeding age. "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" saith God, enumerating the advantages of the Jews; "wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be trodden down; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it." A message no less alarming was denounced by the Evangelist John against the church of Ephesus: "Remember, therefore, from whence

thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

2. *Examine, with deep solicitude, by what motives you were actuated in removing from a place where the institutions of the Gospel were enjoyed.* If the love of this world had an undue influence in producing this change, you have reason to apprehend the displeasure of God, for thus preferring your temporal interests to the eternal welfare of your souls. Parents often become discontented with their outward condition; they consult the worldly prosperity of themselves and their families, without reflecting on their immortal concerns. Like Lot, as he looked over the plains of Sodom, they behold some other country, that it is fertile, and will probably afford great worldly advantages; they perhaps too lightly break off their church connections, resign their church privileges, and go where the sound of the Gospel is rarely heard, and the waters of the sanctuary rarely flow.

But whether your removal from the privileges of the sanctuary was in any degree by your own fault, or not, let me remind you, that although you now enjoy not the opportunity of worshipping God in the devotions of the temple, there are various private institutions, which it is equally your duty and interest to improve.

1. *Be attentive daily to peruse some portions of the sacred Scriptures.* Next to the Gospel preached, the Gospel diligently and devoutly read, has been usually effectual, through the Holy Ghost, for sanctifying and comforting the heirs of promise. In these lively oracles a full revelation of the divine will and our duty is afforded; we are taught what man was originally, as formed by his Creator, "upright," and perfect in every part, made "after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness;" we have also a discovery of that misery into which our apostasy has plunged us, that "all flesh have corrupted their ways," are alienated

from the life of God, and exposed to his wrath. While this inspired volume reveals our ruin by the first Adam, it also unfolds that mysterious, divinely gracious plan, which Jehovah in his love has devised for our recovery, through the sufferings of the "second Adam:" it exhibits the Son of God in his mediatorial character as adapted to all the wants and miseries of perishing man; as "bearing our sins in his own body on the tree;" as bringing in everlasting righteousness, to secure our acceptance with the Father; as "able to save to the uttermost" even "the chief of sinners," who have recourse to his mercy. These lively oracles bring also to view the future condition of all men: that the "wicked," they who know not God, and obey not his Gospel, "shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous," all who are washed in the Saviour's blood, and sanctified by his Spirit, and devoted to his service, shall be awarded to "life eternal." Such are the infinitely important truths which the Bible discloses, and which render it "worthy of all acceptation," and of our most diligent perusal. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold." Therefore, as you value your own souls, and the souls of your offspring, "let this word of Christ dwell in you richly." Be often reflecting upon it alone, and reading and repeating it in your families.

2. *Be careful to erect your altar to the Lord, and offer up your spiritual sacrifice morning and evening.* No arguments are necessary to show that this is a reasonable service; that it is a tribute of gratitude justly due to the God who formed and preserves you in a family capacity. It is incumbent on parents and masters, in whatever circumstances they are placed; but, if a comparison may with propriety be made, it appears more indispensable in your present situation. Being destitute of ministerial instruction, by visitation, or catechizing, or the stated preaching of the word, it

becomes you to aim at supplying this want by greater diligence in performing the private duties of religion.

It is an ancient remark, that every parent should officiate as "a prophet, and priest, and king," in the circle of his own family. It becomes him, as a prophet, to instruct them; to make them early acquainted with their guilt and pollution, with the necessity of "being born of the Spirit," and living by faith in Jesus for pardon and glory. As a priest, he ought daily to intercede for his family, acknowledging their iniquities, and looking by prayer for the communication of every necessary blessing. It is incumbent on him, as a king, to rule them in the fear of Jehovah, to maintain spiritual order, to correct whatever is irregular, and, like Abraham, "command his children after him to keep the ways of the Lord." Were all to whom the God of providence has intrusted the management of a family thus faithful; was it their chief solicitude to regulate the moral and religious conduct of their children and, "bring them up in the admonition of the Lord," how happy beyond description would be the result! We should less frequently witness a mournful ignorance in the rising generation; we should be less alarmed with the progress of those errors, by which God is dishonored, the glory of Zion obscured, civil order subverted, and the souls of men eternally destroyed.

Much may be done for the living God, and for the future interest of those young immortals who are intrusted to your care, by zeal and fidelity in your stations. But, if they are permitted to grow up without suitable instruction, and example, and discipline, what can be expected afterwards but irreligion, profligacy, and a wanton compliance with every prevailing opinion, however absurd and fatal; and in the end, without the extraordinary interposition of divine mercy, eternal exclusion from the favor of God? And tell me, ye parents who are neglecting the spiritual nurture of your children, is there nothing appalling, nothing melting in the apprehension of their never-ending destruction? Do

not your hearts recoil at the thought, that a son or daughter, dear to you as life; one whom you have tenderly nursed; for whose interest you rise early, and resign many comforts, and encounter innumerable difficulties and dangers; whose opening powers you often behold with delight, and to whom you look forward as your support in old age; that such a child should finally perish; and perhaps, as it is dropping into the gulf of perdition, should fasten its eyes upon you in the horrors of despair, and charge its damnation to your neglect? Read the following declarations, and tremble while you read them: "The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked." "He will pour his fury upon the families which call not on his name."

3. *Be particularly careful that the Sabbath of the Lord be sanctified in your dwellings.* No divine ordinance is introduced with greater solemnity, nor enforced by weightier considerations. There is no religious institution to the observation of which richer blessings are promised, nor against the violation of which heavier judgments are denounced. "If thou call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable, and honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. But if you will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath-day, and not to bear a burden, then I will kindle a fire in your gates, and it shall devour your palaces, and it shall not be quenched." Remember, however, Christian parents, it is not sufficient that you yourselves cease from secular pursuits, and occupy that day in the duties of religion. The Lord God has given commandment concerning your children and household: "Thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, that is within thy gates." Great vigilance is therefore requisite, not only for keeping

your own hearts, but for directing the conduct of those who are under your charge. Besides, you are more exposed, while destitute of the public ordinances, to waste that day in idleness, or amusements; and therefore greater watchfulness must be exercised. Those who have no sanctuary to attend, almost necessarily become fatigued with unvarying exercises at home; and, without special vigilance, yield to a spirit of sloth, or amuse themselves by improper visits and recreations. Thus the holy Sabbath is profaned, the most high God provoked, and wrath is ultimately brought down on families and nations.

In order to prevent the Lord's day from appearing a *weariness*, it may be proper occasionally to vary your services. Besides the time occupied by individuals in secret devotion, it may be expedient to call your families together for reading portions of the Scriptures, or some practical writings; for repeating psalms or hymns, and uniting in songs of praise. Were the hours of the Sabbath judiciously distributed in this manner, that sacred day, instead of appearing a *burden*, would become your delight; it would be rendered, through the divine blessing, an important means of your progress in holiness, and a pledge of that rest which all the redeemed shall hereafter enjoy in the heavenly world: your own souls would be comforted and edified; your houses converted into little sanctuaries "for the Holy One of Israel;" and your children trained up for usefulness in this world, and salvation in the next.

4. *In all your devotions, whether secret or social, spread before a compassionate Saviour the desolate condition of your settlements.* Be importunate with Him, "who is head over all things to the church," who "hath received gifts for men," that he would send you "pastors according to his own heart, who may feed you with knowledge and understanding." Tell him, "that the harvest is plenteous, and the laborers" so "few," that thousands around you are "perishing through lack of knowledge;" tell him of your

own necessities, of the necessities of your families, and others; and "give him no rest, until he have mercy upon you," by sending you the stated administration of his word.

Again; after you have been thus importunate with a prayer-hearing God, communicate your desires to the ministers of religion, and to our missionary societies. Let the cry from Macedonia, which reached the ears, and melted the heart of the apostle, be wafted with every breeze from your moral wilderness: "COME OVER, AND HELP US." If there was a famine of bread or of water among you, could you securely slumber? Would not the alarm be instantly spread through every part of your settlement? Would it not be the subject of painful solicitude to individuals, and of conversation with each other, when you occasionally meet? And is there nothing alarming in the famine which you already feel; a "famine of the bread of life and the water of life;" of those ordinances which are usually honored for the salvation of men?

Be exhorted also to improve, with becoming diligence, the labors of those missionaries who occasionally visit you: receive them with all readiness, as "the messengers of our churches, and the glory of Christ;" invite them to your houses; cherish them with your conversation; ask an interest in their prayers, and give them an interest in yours, that their hearts may be encouraged, and their "labors of love" crowned with success; especially, wait with respect and affection upon all their public administrations among you: let not a single sermon which they preach, nor a religious conference or prayer-meeting which they appoint, be neglected, when it is in your power to attend. Consider the privations to which these servants of Jesus are necessarily subjected, the toils which they endure, and the expense at which they are supported by the friends of Zion, from a solicitude for your welfare; and will it not appear proper, that you continue "instant in season and out of season," in attending to their instructions? "How beauti-

ful, upon the mountains, are the feet of him who bringeth good tidings; who publisheth salvation" to perishing sinners?

This Tract is prepared as a remembrancer of truths in which you have probably been often instructed; and it is designed as a memorial that, although absent in body, there are friends of Jesus with whom you were once acquainted, who, as it were, yet present with you in spirit, earnestly desire your consolation and peace; and who, although the relation which formerly existed between you and them is dissolved by your removal, still affectionately regard your spiritual and eternal welfare. I cannot conclude without again reminding you, in their name, of the privileges which you enjoy even in your present situation, and seriously and affectionately urging you to improve them. Although denied the pleasure of statedly entering the "gates of Zion," or testifying, at the sacramental table, your devotion to Jesus, and affection to his dear followers, yet you have access to the Scriptures, which you may daily consult for direction and comfort. "This is the more sure word of prophecy, to which you do well to take heed." But, while the Bible in your houses is an unutterable privilege, recollect also, that it greatly increases your responsibility; and, if neglected, must eternally aggravate your torment beyond what language can express. "Search the Scriptures," therefore, for in them "ye have eternal life;" and in reading them, receive, as your only portion, that Saviour of whom they testify. Like Mary, sit, with all humility, at his feet, relying upon him for pardon and peace, for spiritual light, and life, and joy, until "you receive the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

Permit me also again to entreat you, while excluded from the house of God on the Sabbath, to maintain the "church in your respective houses," by the performance of family religion morning and evening. This duty, devoutly discharged, will supply in some degree the want of sanc-

tuary privileges; it will have a tendency to impress the consciences of your children with a sense of their dependence on God, and prepare them for attending, with more profit, the public ordinances, when you may hereafter enjoy them. But if you live without the form of godliness; if you sit down to the bounties of Providence without acknowledging their author; if you habitually retire to rest in the evening, and resume your labors in the morning, in the neglect of family devotion; I must regard all your pretended anxiety for the institutions of the temple as empty hypocrisy, as insult and mockery to a heart-searching Jehovah. He who is not constrained, from a principle of respect to the authority of God, to worship him in private, would not, from proper motives, worship him in public, was the opportunity enjoyed. Besides, what answer can you render him who has "written to you the great things of his law," and commanded you "to teach them diligently to your children; to talk of them, when you are sitting in the house, and walking by the way; when you are lying down, and rising up?"

And now, beloved brethren, let your consciences testify, whether those whom God once placed over you to watch for your souls, and on whose ministrations you were accustomed to attend, did not faithfully urge you "to seek first the kingdom of God;" to aspire not after the profession merely, but the power of godliness, as your happiness, and honor, and interest; whether they did not aim at persuading you, that the gain of a world could not materially profit, with the loss of your souls, and of the great salvation. "My heart's desire and prayer is," that the admonitions of those men of God may not be forgotten, in your present separation from them; that their influence may not be destroyed "by the cares of this world," or the artifices of the great adversary of your peace. Many of you who once listened to the voice of the ministers of Christ, shall see their face no more in the flesh; but all that was formerly spoken, and

all that is now written in these pages, is transcribed in the records of heaven; and if slighted, must appear as additional evidence to justify the Judge in pronouncing your final condemnation. And, ah! shall those who were once set over you in the Lord, see upon his left hand any one of you, to whom they have stood in the most tender and endearing relation of a pastor? and whom they have often instructed "in the things which belong to your peace;" or to whose hands they have given the bread and the wine, the consecrated symbols of his own body and blood? Shall they hear any one of you, in the anguish of despair, "calling upon the mountains and rocks to hide you from the face of him who sitteth upon the throne," whom they have so frequently exhibited to you as *mighty* and willing *to save you?* Must they lift up their voice, saying, AMEN, to that sentence which, louder than a thousand thunders, shall burst upon the Gospel despiser, DEPART FROM ME, YE CURSED.

Thou Holy Spirit, Jehovah, who art by office the applier of the redemption of Jesus, bring to the recollection of the readers of these pages every truth which has been either spoken or written in conformity to thy will; by thine almighty energies upon their hearts, cause life to accompany these instructions, and render them effectual for alarming, or reclaiming, or confirming; and to thee, thou divinely gracious Comforter, with the eternal Father, and the coëqual Son our Saviour, shall be ascribed the undivided honor, both in time and through eternity.

No. 183.

ON REPENTANCE.

BY REV. JOSEPH S. CHRISTMAS.

While many truths of religion are difficult to be understood, and liable to be mistaken, the plan of salvation and the way of acceptance, the doctrines necessary to be believed, and the duties requisite to be done, are clearly revealed. Who need be so ignorant as not to know that repentance is an immediate duty? It is the burden of every prophet's message; it is the theme of every teacher's instruction; it is the lesson taught by the threatenings of the law; it is the duty enforced by the whole spirit of the Gospel. The voice of him who cried in the wilderness, said, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." When the blessed Redeemer began to preach, it was, "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel." The apostles, as soon as commissioned by our Lord, "went out and preached that men should repent." Peter's message to the Jews was, "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out;" and Paul's testimony to the Gentiles was, that "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent." The calls of God's providence, and the influences of his Holy Spirit, whisper, "Repent ye;" and this little Tract, reader, sent with God's commission to your heart, charges you, as you value your soul, to repent.

Let me show you, that the duty is not so strongly insisted upon without the best reason.

The necessity of repentance appears from the fact, *that all have sinned.* There is not a human being who does not come under the implication of guilt. It matters not that you be sober, industrious, moral, amiable, and respected; if you have ever for one moment loved the Lord your God with less than your whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, then you are a sinner in the sight of the great God. I take your guilt for granted, before proceeding one step further. The command to repent implies your guilt.

An angel of light is never commanded to repent, because an angel of light has never committed sin. Now, so surely as you have sinned, so surely must you repent, or abide the consequences. That these consequences are just and reasonable, is the sentence of both our own consciences and our Judge. *Our own consciences* acquiesce in the condemnation of the impenitent sinner. The law is holy in its nature, just in its requisitions, and good in its tendencies. The sinner broke it freely, and inexcusably; and if he will not repent, it is but right he should perish. The same sentence is pronounced by the mouth of *our Judge:* "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "*Cursed* is every one who *continueth not in all things* written in the book of the law to do them." "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Oh, "consider this, you that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

Repentance is necessary, because *inseparably connected with a cordial acceptance of the Gospel.*

The Gospel comes with the offer of pardon to the guilty, and life to the dead in trespasses and sins; but the unconvinced, unhumbled sinner, feeling no heinous guilt, welcomes no pardon; and, insensible of his spiritual death, desires no spiritual life. The offer of mercy seems to him like the officiousness of a physician who urges his medicines upon the well; or like the insulting pittance of charity tendered to the rich. The Gospel is really no *Gospel* to him; its report is not *glad tidings:* on the contrary, he is offended with its humbling proposals, and revolts at its holy requisitions. What! shall he confess that he is poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked, when he feels that he is rich, and increased in goods, and has need of nothing? What! as an undone sinner, shall he rely on the merits of a crucified Saviour, when he believes his heart is at bottom sound, his works in the main righteous, his prayers on the whole acceptable, and God too merciful to damn so good a person as he? Reader, if these are your views, the gate of salvation by faith in Christ is entirely too narrow for you.

Repentance is necessary, because without it a sinner can *never be fit for the kingdom of God,* even supposing he gained admission there. He can never, with the multitude

which no man can number, ascribe salvation unto the Lamb. For, having never felt himself lost, he can never feel the grateful joy of a rescue. Having never cordially acknowledged his sin, or believed in Christ, he must still impute to God a want of wisdom in framing, a want of goodness in giving, and a want of faithfulness to himself, in not immediately executing his law. Claiming heaven as his right, he must think God unjust for casting down to hell innumerable sinners no worse than he. The contradictions are endless, which the salvation of an impenitent man involves. The salvation of an impenitent man! No, it can never take place. It is forbidden by the sinner's own nature, the glory of God, the reason of the case, the terms of salvation, and the sentence of the Judge of all.

Supposing you convinced of the necessity of repentance, let me call your attention to the NATURE of the duty.

Repentance is that *abhorrence of sin*, and *that sorrow on its account, which leads a man to* FORSAKE *it*. The Scriptures have nowhere laid down a standard by which the pungency of penitential sorrow must be measured. It differs in individuals, and it varies in the same individual. My design is not to point out the *degree*, but the *nature* of repentance. It is sorrow for *sin;* which is quite distinct from a sorrow for the *consequences* of sin. There are those who, alarmed by their exposure to punishment, express the deepest regret for sin, who are no sooner relieved from their fears, than they relapse into their former ungodliness. "When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned and inquired early after God. Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." Psalm 78 : 34–37. Such spurious sorrow, it is to be feared, is exercised by most who repent upon their death-bed.

We have an impressive specimen of the language of true repentance in the fifty-first Psalm: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." The penitent man will breathe out his soul in lowly confession of his iniquity; in self-abasement, and acknowledgment of God's justice in his condemnation. And

he will, at the same time, *turn* from his evil way. He will seek to repair the injuries he may have done his fellow-men. He who approaches God with the gains of dishonesty in his hands, may be assured that he is a hypocrite. He that, under the pretext of law, deprives his creditors of their due, and beholds them suffering by his former extravagance or fraud, and makes no restitution from his present abundance, has no evidence that he has repented of that extravagance or fraud. He that continues to overreach his neighbor in a bargain, or sells his goods for better than they are, or continues, knowingly, to deal in contraband or smuggled commodities, can have no just pretensions to sincerity in his religion.

While the penitent deplores before God the pernicious principles he may have formerly held, he will be concerned to *reclaim those who have been injured by his influence;* though, to his regret, he will often find, that he has sown seeds which he can never eradicate, and done a mischief he can never repair.

Repentance will lead to a *firm determination to be holy in future.* Reformation is, after all, the only test of genuine repentance. It matters not how much men may feel, if this be wanting. There may be the terror of Cain, the sorrow and restitution of Judas, the fair promises of Pharaoh, the humiliation of Ahab, the readiness of Herod in hearing gladly and doing many things, the joy of the stony-ground hearers; there may be the tongues of angels, the gift of prophecy, and the knowledge of all mysteries; but if *reformation* be wanting, it is all in vain. The difference between the sorrow of the world, which worketh death, and godly sorrow, is, that the one leaves a man to continue in known sin, while the other leads him without delay to forsake it. He that stole must steal no more; he that was fraudulent, must not only make restitution, but must be thenceforth honest. The tongue that was dipped in the poison of asps, must be regulated by the law of kindness; the profane must reverence the thrice-holy name of God; the liar observe the strictest verity; the Sabbath-breaker must hallow God's appropriated day; the drunkard must forsake his cups, and the gambler abandon his cards, or there is no evidence, however pungent were his convictions, or deep his regret, that he is a genuine penitent.

It is true, that he who has sincerely repented will be afterwards followed by his besetting sin; but though it may perplex him, and sometimes overcome him, it will not reign in him, nor be indulged by him.

It is proper to observe, that genuine repentance towards God is never separated from faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. The convinced sinner can find no peace of conscience but in the cross of Christ; and a sight of him whom he has pierced will increase his mourning for sin. Hence, a penitent unbeliever, or an impenitent believer, are characters nowhere to be found.

The nature of repentance being explained, let me next mention some ENCOURAGEMENTS to this duty.

And first observe, that *God commands it.* Were a king to send a message to some rebellious subjects, requiring them to repent, it would surely be regarded as a favorable indication; for he who intends no mercy, requires no submission. If no other intelligence had ever come from heaven to our guilty race, but the command, "Repent ye," it should light up a beam of hope, and lead us to conclude that God had thoughts of peace and purposes of mercy towards the relenting.

But we have many most precious *promises* made to the penitent. "Thus saith the high and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite heart, and that trembleth at my word." "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall find mercy." Prov. 28: 13. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we *confess,*" that is, acknowledge and forsake, "our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John, 1: 9. If, after promises so encouraging, the vilest should despair, let him consider the case of other returning sinners. Let him remember David, who, after the black crimes of adultery and murder, was pardoned. Let him think of Manasseh, who, having caused the streets of Jerusalem to run

down with innocent blood, in his old age sought mercy, and found it; of Peter, who denied his Lord thrice, even with cursing, and yet, when he repented, was forgiven; of Saul of Tarsus, who made havoc of the church, and persecuted the saints unto death, with a desperate malice, yet upon repentance was forgiven, and became the chiefest of the apostles. Let him look upon our Saviour's striking delineation of every penitent, in the parable of the prodigal son. When he came to himself, like a poor sinner when he begins for the first time to reflect on his ways, he thought of his father's house and the plenty there. He resolved to go, and try whether, after much humiliation, he might be admitted among the hired servants. He goes, with many a bitter reflection on his folly, with many an anxious and desponding fear about his reception. He draws nigh the home he had deserted, afraid to approach. His father sees him afar off. His heart is moved within him. He runs, he falls upon his neck, and kisses him. "Father," cries the weeping penitent, "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." But the father said unto the servants, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." Oh, prodigal son! impenitent sinner! whosoever thou art, who hast wandered far from thy Father's house, and art starving in sin, you have only to go back, in humble acknowledgments, and you shall have a gracious reception.

It remains to point out the PROPER TIME for repentance. Your duty is plain, and the direction short: "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation." "*To-day*, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." But the main obstacle is yet to be overcome—your repugnance to the duty. Nothing effectual will be accomplished, unless you can be persuaded to repent without delay. And yet no impenitent sinner will ever cast his eyes upon these pages, who has not been repeatedly exhorted to this duty. Why then should I hope that this friendly warning will not be treated like that of Lot, who seemed as one that mocked to his sons-in-law? If it were by human might or power,

the friends of Jesus might sit down in despair; but it is by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts.

Reader, while you are looking upon this page, God is looking upon your heart. Perhaps his Holy Spirit, whom you have so long resisted, is now for the last time striving to bring you to repentance. Should you stifle your present convictions, resolve upon a more convenient season, and venture your eternity upon the never-coming morrow, you may be given up to hardness of heart, and be henceforth deserted of the Spirit of God. Should this be the case, then it would have been better for you if you never had been born.

Again, consider that delay only *rivets the bondage of sin, and increases the difficulty* of repentance. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are *accustomed* to do evil."

Consider, also, that the *terms of salvation will never be easier* than they now are. Were you to live a thousand years, God would not lower the requisitions of his Gospel one jot or tittle. He will still require repentance. He will still demand faith.

There are few unconverted men who do not intend at some time to repent. But when will you execute your intention? "When I become somewhat older," says one; "I am too young to think of serious things." You, my young friend, are the very person who ought to think of them. As for the old, there is little hope of them; but now, while your hearts are tender, and your habits unformed, it will be comparatively easy. They that seek God early, shall find him; and they that find him, will never regret it. None who read this are too young to repent. If you are not too young to sin, and too young to die, you are not too young to repent. "I will repent," says another, "when I shall have acquired a competency, and become more abstracted from the necessary cares and business of the world." Reflect a moment, before you make so dangerous an experiment. Consider whether the world is not likely to have the same influence on you, that it has upon all others; whether this whirlpool, growing more rapid the nearer you approach it, will not finally ingulf you beyond recovery. Consider, as you love your own soul, whether, even supposing you should be spared and prospered as

much as you desire, you will be in a state of mind more favorable to repentance than now. No, you will not; and I warn you against the hazard you deliberately run.

The thoughts of the heart of another are, "If I repent now, I must renounce all pleasures, and live a life of religious gloom, the very idea of which I cannot bear. God will have mercy on me, if I repent at my last hour; and thus I shall escape the penance, and get the blessing too." Let me tell you, sinner, whosoever you be, that you are under the delusion of the devil. And is a life of piety, then, a life of irksome gloom? Bear witness with me, all ye that have ever tasted that the Lord is gracious, if this is not an utter misapprehension. And so you intend, after you have spent the best of your life in the service of Satan, to give a miserable remnant to God! And are you perfectly sure that you will repent at the last hour? Do you not know that there is a time, when you may call, and God will not answer; when you may stretch forth your hands, and he will not regard? What evidence will you then have that your repentance is sincere? Is it not plain, that the only additional motive which you can then have, will be the fear of punishment? And is it not clear, that such a repentance will be a mere forced submission? Are you sure you will have an opportunity to repent at your dying hour? Many lose their lives suddenly, without any warning; many become immediately delirious; many are so racked with pain, and stupefied by medicine, that it is impossible for them to command their thoughts, or make any preparation for eternity. Assuredly a dying hour is not the proper time for repentance. "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked" *now* "forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

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THE

CHIMNEY-SWEEPER.

Mr. Thompson, a gentleman residing in the city of London, made it his frequent employment, when the labors of the day were concluded, to visit the cottages of the poor, that he might personally relieve the indigent, and comfort the afflicted. His servants having informed him that his chimneys required cleaning, he resolved to visit the chimney-sweeper himself, and to take with him his eldest son James, who was often favored to be his companion in his benevolent excursions. In the evening they walked towards the narrow lane and poor neighborhood where William Black the chimney-sweeper resided, in the cellar of a small house.

As they were descending the staircase, James pulled his father by the coat, and whispering, desired him to listen to the voice of a person who was reading aloud. They proceeded silently nearer to the door, and then heard a lad reading from the Bible. The chimney-sweeper, with his wife and three

boys, were sitting around the fire, attending to the passage which one of the lads was reading, with much apparent seriousness. When he had finished the chapter, they all kneeled down, and the man prayed to God with much fervency.

Mr. Thompson was delighted at the simplicity and fervor with which this prayer was uttered, and opening the door, he entered, and seizing the astonished chimney-sweeper by the hand, "Friend," said he, "I am rejoiced to find that you are a brother in Christ Jesus. I have listened to your prayers, and must acknowledge that true Christians, in the highest and lowest stations of life, are children of the same family; they feel the same wants, they need the same mercy, and they are looking forward to the same home. God is our common father and friend; he visits the cottage of the pious peasant or the cellar of the praying chimney-sweeper, as well as the mansions of the wealthy and the palaces of princes. Your gratitude and contentment have taught me a lesson, which I hope I shall never forget, when bowing at the throne of grace. I must stay a few minutes with you, to inquire by what means you have been led to adopt these principles, and thus to live to the service of God." Poor William at first could scarcely speak, and hung down his head; but Mr. Thompson's kind address encouraged him, and dispelled his fears. He entreated Mr. Thompson and his son to take a seat, if they could sit down in his poor cellar.

When they were seated, Mr. Thompson was surprised, on looking around, to see every thing so clean and neat, considering the place in which they were. A modest looking woman was sitting by the table, sewing, and the three boys around her had already got their books, to learn the lessons which were set them at their Sabbath-school.

"I wonder how you keep every thing so clean, in your business?" said Mr. Thompson.

"Why, it is a hard matter," replied William; "and Mary and I have much trouble sometimes to make things

decent; but we manage to keep the house pretty clean. You know, sir, there must be some people to sweep chimneys as well as to do other things; and a piece of bread honestly earned in this way, with the blessing of God, tastes as sweet to us as the greatest delicacies do to the rich."

"True, William; 'godliness, with contentment, is great gain;' true happiness depends more upon the mind than upon outward circumstances; the grace of God, and the hopes of the Christian, will cheer and support the heart in every situation." Mr. Thompson then earnestly requested William to give him some account of his past history, to which, after much persuasion, he consented; and gave the following narration:

"I have never known, sir, nor do I suppose I ever shall find out who were my parents. The earliest circumstances of my life which I can remember are, that I was placed in the parish workhouse of a village about twenty miles from London, surrounded with a large number of persons, who, in general, were very profligate and wretched. No kind father taught me to read the word of God, corrected me for my faults, or conducted my youthful feet to the sanctuary. No mother taught me to lisp an infant prayer, or a simple hymn. I never received her caresses, or rejoiced at her smiles. I was friendless, uninstructed, and depraved. My earliest practices were evil; I soon learned to lie, to curse, and to swear, and there was scarcely any sin, of which my age was capable, that I did not commit.

"One morning, the master of the workhouse called me to his room, and informed me that he was going to apprentice me to a Mr. B., a chimney-sweeper, of London. He then said, 'Before you leave this house, I will tell you all that I know of your history, for it may be useful to you at some period of your life. My wife was going out early one morning, and, as she tried to open the front door, she found that there was something against it; she called to me, and on opening the door we saw a basket covered with linen.

On opening it we discovered a little babe, who wept as we awoke him from his slumbers. We immediately supposed that this must have been a child of one of the gypsies, who had lately pitched their tents on our common, and who we found had decamped in the night. We took you in, and you have been ever since supported by this parish; and we gave you the name of William Black, on account of your dark complexion. As you are now getting old enough to earn your bread, you must go out into the world. Mr. B. will come to-morrow morning to take you away; and I wish you, my lad, good luck wherever you go.'

"I rejoiced to hear that I was about to change my situation; and though the idea of becoming a chimney-sweeper may not appear very pleasing, yet I was glad, by any means, to leave the workhouse. In the morning Mr. B. came and took me away with him. As we came near to town, I was exceedingly delighted to see the carts, and the gay coaches, and the splendid things and persons of London. But I soon found my hopes of happiness to be vain; for my master was an ill-natured man, and very frequently chastised his apprentices severely. I being younger than most of them, was exposed also to their ill-treatment; and I really think if I had not been naturally very hardy, from being bred up in a workhouse, that I should not have long survived.

"In this situation I became worse and worse, as I advanced in years, so that even my wicked companions and neighbors would sometimes cry out, 'Shame! shame! you are too bad! too bad!' All the religious instruction which I received, was from being forced sometimes to go to church with my master's wife or children, though this I very much disliked; and I often refrained from cleaning myself on the Sabbath, that I might not be compelled to go to church, and thus lose some hours of play or vicious pleasures.

"One morning, when it was scarcely light, I was sweeping a gentleman's chimneys, and being at the top of the house, I resolved to amuse myself by going to the adjoining

roof, and attempting to frighten the servants by shaking my brush at the garret window and groaning. As I was getting over the division which separated the two houses, to carry this frolic into execution, the bricks gave way, and I fell to the ground. If the house had been as high as most in London, I should certainly have been killed on the spot. I was quite insensible for a long time; but, on recovering, I found myself in the hospital; my head was much hurt, and one of my arms broken. I lay upon my bed in very great pain of body and of mind. Oh! if I had died, said I to myself, where should I have now been? I have heard of a heaven, but I could never have hoped to arrive there: I have heard of hell, and there I must have been condemned for ever to remain. How dreadful the anger of God; and how much have I deserved his severest punishments! With such thoughts my mind was distressed all the long, long, sleepless night. I sometimes thought of praying; but then it struck me, that God, whose name I had so often blasphemed, would not hear such a wretch as I. However, one night the agony of my soul was so great, that I groaned out, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' Then I withdrew my words, adding with a flood of tears, 'I am too great a sinner to be pardoned; I cannot dare to hope for mercy.' 'There is mercy with God,' exclaimed a poor shoemaker, who was in the next bed to mine, and overheard me; 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners who feel their sinfulness, and who cry to him for mercy. I was as great a sinner as you, but I hope I have found mercy; and Jesus invites you: 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' 'Can this be so,' said I; 'this information is too good to be true; is not God too holy to forgive me, and am not I too great a sinner for Jesus Christ to pardon?' 'No,' replied he; 'the word of God, contained in the Bible, speaks pardon and peace to the guilty, while

the holiness, as well as the mercy of God, are shown forth in the atonement made by Jesus Christ. If you had not been injured by your fall, you would have had no occasion for the surgeon's aid; so, if we had not been spiritually wounded and diseased, there would have been no necessity for a Saviour. The whole need not a physician, but those that are sick.'

"As both of us became gradually better, I earnestly requested this poor man, whose name was Adams, to teach me to read the Bible, which spoke so much about Jesus Christ, and showed the way of salvation through him. He was willing to instruct me; and though I was rather slow at first, not having had any advantages while young, yet as I was resolutely determined to learn, and was constantly employed at my book, I found difficulties vanish, and was soon able to make out a chapter in the Bible. How did I delight to sit reading and thinking over the sacred Scriptures! I had never enjoyed true pleasure till this time; for even the sorrows of penitence are more desirable than the enjoyments of sin.

"When we were both recovered, we had a sorrowful parting; particularly because I was about to be separated from the Bible; however, I agreed to arise early every Sabbath morning, and go to his lodging, and there commit to memory a chapter, that I might repeat it to myself every day of the week.

"The change which I had experienced was soon noticed by my former companions, who exceedingly wondered that I would not still go with them to the same excess of riot. They began to whisper among themselves that I had become religious; and some of them shrewdly pretended to suspect that my brain had been turned by my fall. My neighbors, who once thought me 'too bad,' now agreed that I was certainly righteous overmuch. They, with my master and fellow-apprentices, now began to ridicule and abuse me; but when they saw that I bore their reproaches with pa-

tience, and was willing to do them any acts of kindness which were in my power, they soon discontinued their insults, and I trust some of them have derived lasting good from the instructions I have been enabled to give them.

"I went every Sabbath to my friend the shoemaker, who took me to the house of God, where I have spent many pleasant hours, in a little dark corner, which I was permitted to occupy. These means of grace, and the pious conversation and example of my friend, were very useful. From the time I quitted the hospital, I very much regretted that I had no Bible of my own; this was a treasure which I longed to have constantly near me. I resolved to save all the money which was given me, to buy the word of God. In about six months, I found that I had saved a sum that I thought might be sufficient for this purpose, with which I posted off to an old book-shop, where I bought a second-hand Bible; and, as I carried it away, I thought myself one of the happiest individuals in the world. All my spare time I employed in reading the sacred Scriptures; and I have to bless God that they were made very useful to my master's daughter.

"When the time of my apprenticeship had nearly expired, my master died. This afforded an opening for me; and as there was a mutual attachment between his daughter and myself, we were some time after married, and have lived here together ever since. God has blessed us with three children; they go regularly to the Sabbath-school, and I trust will become wise and good in their early days. Thus you see, sir, that God has been with me thus far; and he will be my God and my guide through life, my comfort in death, and my portion for ever beyond the grave."

Mr. Thompson was exceedingly delighted with this account; and, as he walked home with his son, said, "Here is a pleasing instance of the influence of divine grace in humble life, and with few advantages. Oh, then, how careful we should be to improve our greater privileges, the

bounties of Providence, and the blessings of grace; lest this poor chimney-sweeper should rise up in judgment against us at the last day: for, 'to whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.'"

This little story is calculated to excite our admiration of the mercy which is often mingled in the most afflictive events of life. The poor chimney-sweeper suffered not a little in body, in consequence of his rashness and imprudence, but how happy for him that he was thus brought to a sense of his lost condition, and made willing to receive spiritual counsel, to which, under more prosperous circumstances, his heart might have been impenetrably closed. How merciful and kind that Providence which supplied him, in his need, with an enlightened, though humble instructor; and how salutary that advice, which, instead of pointing the convicted sinner to any inferior reliance, directed him at once to "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world."

Let it also be observed how effectual was the work of grace upon his heart; what anxiety he manifested to become acquainted with the sacred Scriptures; how happy the possession of this treasure made him; how diligently he perused its invaluable pages; what a gratification was afforded him in its being made, through his agency, a blessing to others; with what assiduity he endeavored to fulfil the duties of a Christian parent; and with what holy confidence he relied upon God for his perseverance in well-doing, and its glorious rewards.

Reader, thy life hangs by a slender thread. In a moment thou mayest be called to thy dread account. Art thou prepared to meet thy God? Has thy heart been humbled under a sense of sin? Hast thou fled for refuge to the hope set before thee in the Gospel?

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